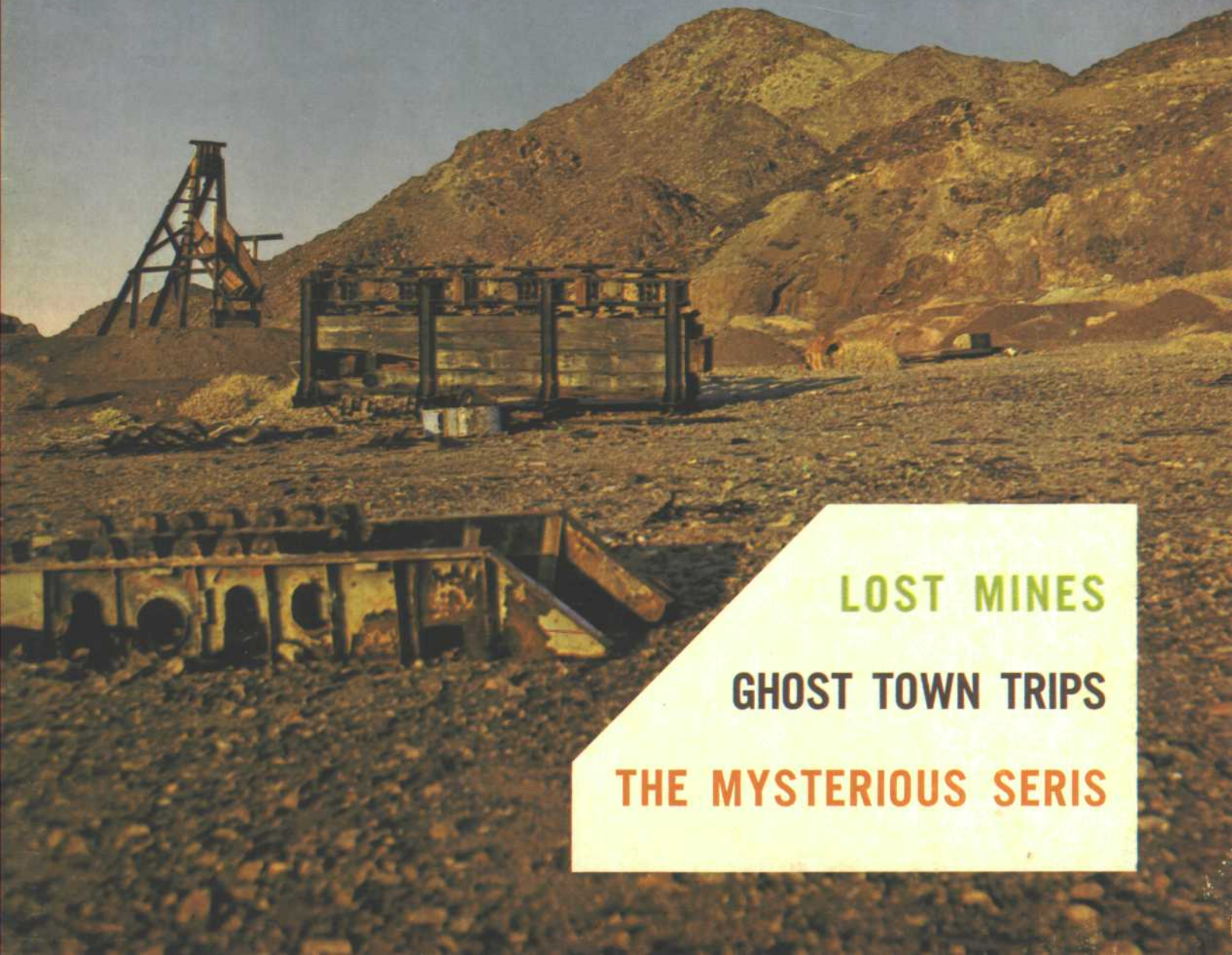


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## January Peppercorns . . . by Jack Pepper

**ON PARKS AND "OVERCROWDED" OUTDOOR AREAS . . .** A 500,000 acre area in eastern Utah contains some of the most spectacular scenery in the world. There are several good gravel roads suitable for passenger car travel into the interior and yet relatively few tourists have been in. Now it has been officially designated as the Canyonlands National Park. Hundreds of thousands of tourists are expected to swarm into the area . . . the same place that was ignored until it was designated as a Federal Park . . . A million and a half people jammed into Yosemite National Park last year, resulting in more than 900 arrests ranging from speeding to murder. There are 214 buildings, stores, hotels, markets and other facilities to provide material comforts for these people seeking "outdoor recreation." And yet, the surrounding area outside the Park with miles of beautiful country and outdoor solitude is practically devoid of human beings fleeing from crowded city conditions . . . Opposed by many conservationists as it would "bring thousands of people to the top of Mt. San Jacinto who would destroy the natural habitat in the surrounding wilderness area and mar the mountainside" the unobtrusive Palm Springs Tramway in Southern California, which provides a spectacular and educational ride from the desert floor to 8000 feet above, is running behind expected capacity and less than one percent of its riders venture more than 50 feet away from the upper station, missing some of the finest forest scenery in the West . . . during the season the designated public beach areas are so crowded you can hardly sit down and the lakes and streams are a veritable tangle of fishing lines.

According to recent surveys in California alone, the need for camping has increased from 4,316 sites available in 1961 to a minimum of 60,000 in 1980, family picnic units from 5,250 to a minimum 1980 requirement of 117,200, and on down the line. The recently passed California bond issue allocating \$150 million for financing beach and park acquisition and development is great for future generations.

But what about the people of the present generation who will be the teachers of the next generation? Are people who jam into public picnic grounds like sardines (there are even some camping areas today where you have to put 50c into a parking meter in order to park your car) really getting "outdoor recreation?" Are people appreciating nature and the outdoors when they leave the crowded cities only to crowd themselves next to other people on "camping" trips? Has civilization progressed so far that people are afraid to be alone? Near every large metropolitan area in California there are hundreds of thousands of acres of deserts and mountains accessible by passenger car over a weekend which offer spectacular scenery, ghost towns, bottle collecting, rock hunting, flora and fauna for the education of children. . . Much of this is public land, yet few people visit it outside of hunting seasons, when hunters are so intent on stalking prey they see nothing else.

For 28 years DESERT Magazine has printed articles and stories on the unusual, uncrowded and educational areas of the West. These areas still exist today for those who really want to "go forth under the open sky, and list to nature's teaching."

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By Margaret Watson

From its earliest saloons and melodons to its handsome theatres, here is an account of the amusements of Nevada's mining frontier from 1850 to 1864. Brimming with anecdotes, quotations and narration of the activities of troupers such as Lotta Crabtree, Adah Menken, Junius Booth, Virginia Howard and backstage support from Mark Twain, Dan De Quille, J. Ross Browne, Julia Bulette, and a host of others, it is packed with good research material. Hurdy-gurdy girls dancing with silver coins jingling in their stockings, Mrs. Hayne's creating her own text for Shakespeare's Ophelia, and other nonsense typical of the time make for fast reading. Hardcover, 387 pages, illustrated with photos and reproductions of old theatre programs. May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Department. \$9.50.

### SOME WESTERN TREASURE TRAILS

By Jesse E. Rascoe

Here is another Frontier book limited to 1000 copies. With maps of Arizona, California, Nevada, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas, this paperback 80-page book contains a wealth of information pertaining to elusive wealth—meteorites, gold and silver. Author Rascoe covers the well-known lost mines, such as the Gunsight, Dutchman, etc., but also introduces lesser known ones gleaned from regional lore. It's a good book for lost mine addicts and Rascoe has done his research well. \$2.00. Available from the DESERT Magazine Book Order Department.

### THE BIRDS OF ARIZONA

By Allan Phillips, Joe Marshall, Gale Monson

Accompanied by 64 full-color reproductions of field sketches by George Miksch Suttin and action photos by Eliot Porter, this book encompasses material relating to 400 species of birds that frequent Life Zones in Arizona ranging from the hot Sonoran desert through oak and pinon woodlands, grassland, transitional pine and fir-aspen forests to the Arc-

tic-Alpine Zone of sedge meadow above the timberline.

The aim of the large format, 215-page book is to tell exactly where and when each kind of Arizona bird can be found and to tell of that which is interesting about it. Here ornithology is presented as an engaging pursuit rather than a pompous dicta of experts, which is a refreshing approach.

Bird lovers everywhere will appreciate this beautiful book, even though it is slanted toward Arizona. This reviewer especially recommends it. Hardcover. Price \$15.00. The publication date was Dec. 1st, so it's hot off the press! May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Department

### SHADY LADIES OF THE WEST

By Ronald Dean Miller

Here's a book that will sell like hot cakes—and no one will be disappointed. Mr. Miller has covered this heretofore unexplored area of American history with liveliness and has lost nothing in authenticity.

"The West had not only the fastest guns," he writes, "but also the fastest women." He describes the lives and times of Lola Montez, Cattle Kate, Highstep Jennie, Madame Featherlegs, Julie Bulette, and other famous girls of the line from San Francisco to Kansas City.

These women, who followed the Mountain Men and the Miners, contributed to the West's first civilizing influence. Many married and attained respectability by producing some of the West's most honored citizens. Others, of course, left a history of sin.

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*By Choral Pepper*

be. The author treats each gem stone individually, describing its appearance, chemical composition, mineral relationships, origin, geologic occurrences, physical aspects and means of recognition. Then, in a separate chapter, he deals with its history and legends. He describes the discovery of diamonds in glacial rock and diving for jade in California waters. This is a good little 173-page, hardcover book, packed with information and fine black and white photos and illustrations. \$5.50. May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Department.

#### **BUNKER HILL LOS ANGELES** By Leo Politi

This colorful book with highly styled Victorian illustrations mixes fact with fancy as it depicts the once-elegant Bunker Hill residential district of Los Angeles. Author-artist Politi drew from memory, precious old photos, and word-of-mouth descriptions from present and former residents to bring alive the gaiety of grand parties, the excitement of fire wagons, the cat on the roof and the old man snoozing on a shaded Bunker Hill porch. His whimsical drawings produce a book to prize. Enough is left of Bunker Hill to be able to distinguish certain landmarks in the book, but by 1970 wrecking cranes will have leveled the remaining curlicued buildings and replaced them with the long straight lines of today.

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**ANZA-BORREGO DESERT GUIDE** by Horace Parker. Second edition of this well-illustrated and documented book is enlarged considerably. Tops among guidebooks, it is equally recommended for research material in an area that was crossed by Anza, Kit Carson, the Mormon Battalion, '49ers, Railroad Survey parties, Pegleg Smith, the Jackass Mail, Butterfield Stage, and today's adventurous tourists. 139 pages, cardboard cover. \$2.95. May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Dept.

**NEVADA'S TURBULENT YESTERDAY** by Don Ashbaugh. Illustrated with a fine collection of old photos and throbbing with exciting tales of Nevada's robust past, this an authentic ghost town history written by one of Nevada's favorite authors. Hard cover. 346 pages. \$7.50.

**THREE PATHS ALONG A RIVER** By Tom Hudson. Illustrated by Ralph Love. Once a river, the San Luis Rey is now only an intermittent stream. History marched beside the river, and in a sense the Valley of San Luis Rey can be called the Gateway to California. The earliest overland travelers coming from Mexico and west from the States traveled the Carrizo Corridor leading inland through Temecula to the Mission of San Gabriel and the Pueblo of Los Angeles. The Butterfield Stage route crossed the river near its headwaters. 245 page. Hard cover. \$6.

**THE DESERT IS YOURS** by Erle Stanley Gardner. In his latest book on the desert areas of the West, the author again takes his reader with him as he uses every means of transportation to explore the wilderness areas and sift the facts and rumors about such famous legends as the Lost Arch, Lost Dutchman and Lost Dutch Oven mines. 256 pages, illustrated. Hard cover. \$7.50.

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Further words would be excessive in attempting to describe this book. It is expensive—\$25—but each of its large format, 221 pages is unsurpassed by any other publication on this subject known to us. Those interested in Pre-Columbian and contemporary arts and crafts of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean will want to have it. May be ordered from DESERT Magazine Book Department.

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**LOWER CALIFORNIA GUIDE BOOK** by Gerhard and Gulick. The authors have revised the third edition to bring it up to date. Veteran travelers in Baja California would not venture south of the border without this authoritative volume. It combines the fascinating history of every location, whether it be a town, mission or abandoned ranch, with detailed mileage maps and locations of gasoline supplies, water and other needed information on Baja. 243 pages with three-color folding map, 16 detailed route maps, 4 city maps, 22 illustrations. Hard cover. \$6.50.

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# BOTTLE FIELD REVISITED

BY GRACE KENDRICK

**I**T WAS ONE of those bright blue and gold Nevada days when every shrub looks newly minted, clean and fresh. It had been 12 years since we first dug bottles in Goldfield, but we knew more about our hobby now. We knew there was no point in wasting time hunting on the surface. Rather—like the gold diggers who made this town famous, we'd have to "mine." It wasn't long until we began to hit "pay dirt." On the rocky side of a gulch we dug into a veritable cache of French and Italian wine bottles—94 to be exact!

These lovely, bulbous, long-necked bottles, while not as old or as valuable as many bottles, are good examples of free blown skill. No two alike, they show bubbles, dimples and imperfections and come in pale and deep greenish aqua or with an amber cast. Of three sizes, some have Chianti etched on the side, bits of labels with other names, and many held Tuscany wine from Italy where they are yet being blown and covered with a protective hand woven holder of straw.

We also found an amber whiskey, a near native from San Francisco, and an aqua beer bottle from the Sioux City Brewing Co. Who knows how it journeyed so far! Although not collectors' items yet, they add interest and variation to our collection and, of course, their value will increase with time.

An amethyst olive oil, an aqua H.H.H. horse liniment, a Carter's pour ink, Mellins food and one of

the four oval-sided olive bottles that turn a deep amethyst in the sun, several tall wines and a tall slim, antique bud vase all comprised a satisfactory day's digging and proved that bottle fields considered already "overworked" still have plenty in their coffers if you are willing to dig.

After loading our lode to carry home, we decided to take a little tour of Goldfield, for this old camp has a golden heritage, not only of valuable metal, but of history, romance and struggle.

Pause for a brief moment and you'll hear the quiet atmosphere come alive. You'll hear the tinkle of honky tonk pianos, the clink of a faro table, boisterous crowds of miners celebrating a new strike or, just because it was Saturday night, the clomp, clomp of

teams and the rattles of wagons in the dusty street.

Down the boardwalk on a side street lined with old frame cabins, you'll hear echoes of family life on a still night—the crying of a baby, barking of dogs, sounds of children at play. It is all there for those interested — the happiness, sorrow, pain, glory and the everlasting struggle just to live in harsh desert land. Nevertheless, Goldfield is beautiful, with its colorful maze of old mine dumps etched with spidery head frames.

Sometimes it's good for the spirit, traveling back in imagination to our desert's early times. While we enjoy the historic old camps and their treasures, it keeps us aware of the 20th Century comforts and treasures that enable us to enjoy the old ones more.

///



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by william head

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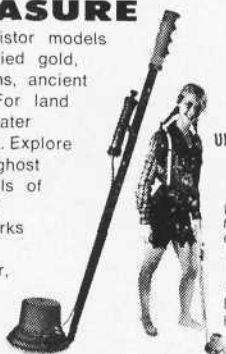
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TEXAS

RED ROCK Canyon did not play  
an important part in the building of  
the old West. William Manly found  
water there after he and his party  
escaped death in Death Valley in  
1849, but he made little mention of  
the canyon's beauty. Later, in the  
'70s, the old stage line from Los An-  
geles to Owens Valley watered stock  
at a spring in the canyon. Then, in  
1937, a homesteader discovered mines  
in the vicinity of her home, which  
made a little news. Today the can-  
yon wins attention as the stage for  
Easter sunrise services and as an  
occasional location for filming West-  
ern movies, but its greatest asset,  
in addition to its distinctive coloring  
and formations, is the fact that it  
is so little known.

The gold found here was not  
enough to lure miners from Bodie  
and Virginia City, but it has been  
reported that a million dollars was  
taken from its mines. According to  
legend, one single nugget worth over

\$1000 was recovered in Reed Gulch,  
located near Red Rock. Old mine  
shafts and cabins may still be found,  
but the canyon's only permanent  
population consists of ghosts.

This strange and beautiful canyon  
is on the major route between Los  
Angeles and Reno, Nevada, via the  
Owens Valley and majestic Mt. Whit-  
ney. New four-lane U.S. Highway 6  
was completed only three years ago  
and runs along the creekbed of Red  
Rock Creek, extending through walls  
of weird sculptures. There's a Ca-  
thedral with Praying Nuns, an am-  
phitheater, temples, palaces, and a  
veritable holocaust of monsters.

Obsidian, pumice and other types  
of volcanic rock prove that the can-  
yon was once the center of great erup-  
tive activity. Strata was deposited,  
layer upon layer, in horizontal order  
upon a floor of crystalline rocks to  
a depth of several thousand feet.  
Moderate consolidation has taken  
place over the years, tilting some of

# IMPERIAL VALLEY



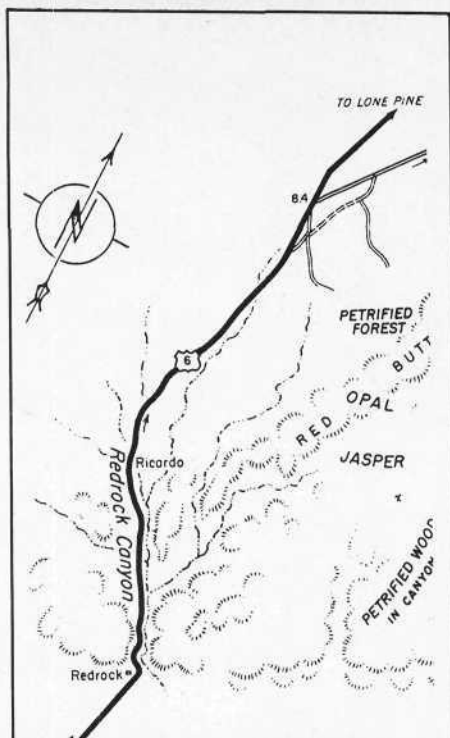
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BRAWLEY, California

National  
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January 1, 2 and 3  
Buttercup Valley Sand Dunes  
Near Holtville and El Centro  
Just Off U.S. Highway 80



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about two and one-half miles. The hills along the main highway are underlain by folded sandstone strata of the Ricardo formation and capped by Pleistocene terrace gravels. Agate, brown jasper, quartz, and crystals have been found in the canyon, but collectors will find rare specimens only if they hike back from the highway. Mammal remains have been found in the upper part of the Ricardo formation and petrified trees in the Last Chance Canyon adjoining Red Rock.

Most of Red Rock Canyon is formed of comparatively soft conglomerate rock, making the life of the canyon, in a geological sense, rather short. There are places where erosion is eating it away, yet at the same time higher up on the mountainside new formations are being deposited to counteract nature's leveling action.

In springtime the blue of lupine, violet of Indian paintbrush and golden splash of poppy accent the scene. The best hours for photography are early morning or late afternoon when weird shadows haunt the cliffs. But even in the spring the canyon can be hot, or the creek suddenly become a raging river in a flash flood, so observe all precautions for desert camping and travel. ///

the strata as much as 45° from the horizontal. The entire formation has been deeply eroded, with much of the lost material escaping in the flood waters of Red Rock Creek.

The highway follows what is known as the Ricardo formation for

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# WITCHIN' FOR GOLD

by Grace Arlington

SINCE THOSE long-ago days of the Spanish Conquistadores and Ponce de Leon men have searched for gold and a fountain of youth. Now comes Wilson W. Adams of Cactus, Arizona, who claims to know a way to find both.

"Fresh air, plenty of exercise, and the excitement of witchery," says the 70-year-old desert dweller, skittering like a young man up mountain slopes and across miles of rough terrain.

Tall, straight, and bearded, with his long hair braided down his back, Adams enjoys his listeners reactions when he claims he can divine for water and—as though that doesn't tax our credulity enough—has a sure-fire method for locating gold and uranium, so he says.

"And witchin' keeps a man young," he insists.

His words bring wonder to the faces of his listeners, or disbelief, awe, or a wild hope that here is a get-rich-quick scheme for those who aren't lucky enough to win a pot of gold by entering contests.

The mystery of the water witch has defied logical solutions for ages. How can a forked twig from a willow or peach tree possess a magic that will point to water far down in the ground? Weighty arguments have proven that it can't; that he who would divine for water is a fakir and a deceiver of gullible people.

But arguments just as weighty prove that it can, and Adams has spent a lifetime in what he claims is the best proof of all—the doing of the thing.

He has cut the mysterious willow twigs and told men where to locate water across the continent in a zig-zag path from Illinois, where he was raised, to the East and then westward to Arizona where he says his bewitch-

ing talent has never caused a man to dig a dry hole, though in an earlier era religion might have brought persecution. When witchcraft first reared its head, the water dowser was said to be possessed and an academic thesis written at Wittenburg, Prussia, once "proved" the divining rod was tainted by Satan.

But in Adams' hands the rod entices interest. "Want to know how to witch for water?" he asks, when people gather to watch him work.

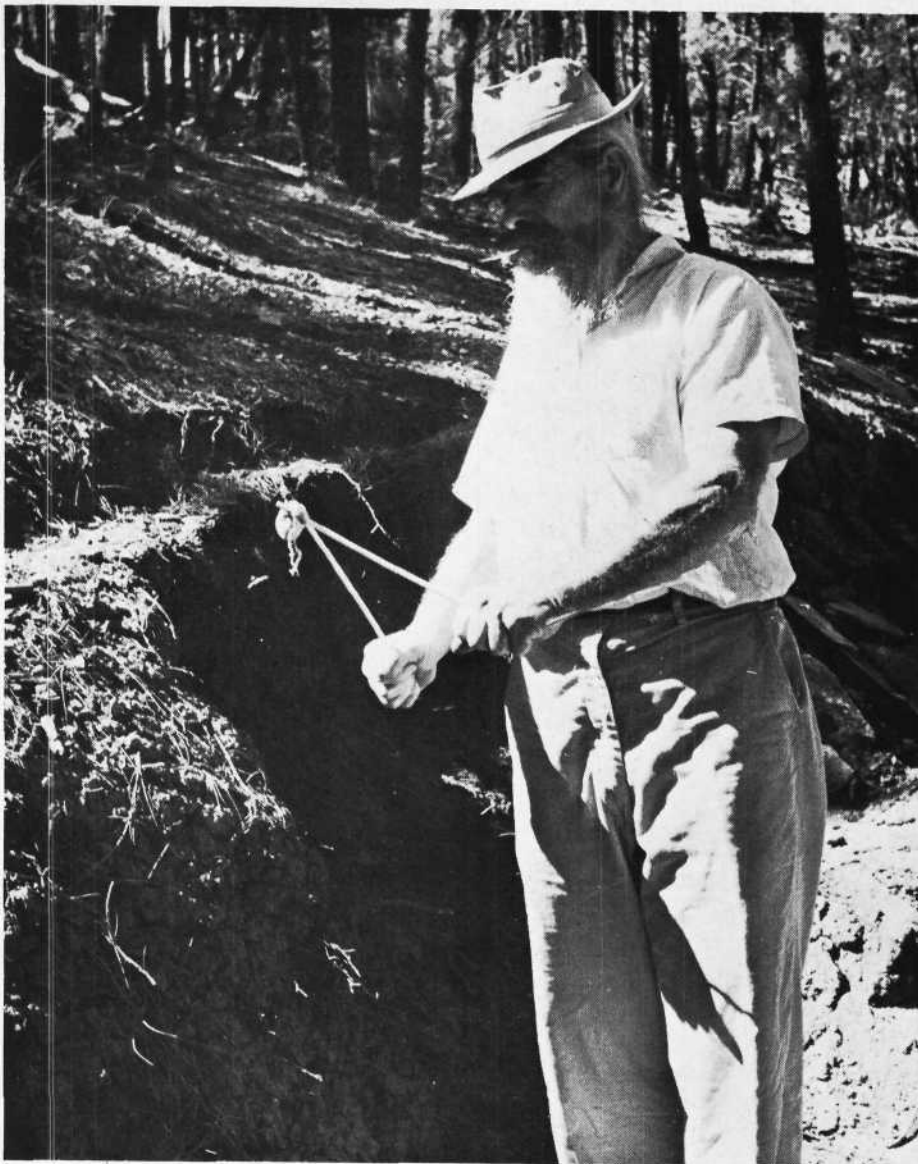
He cuts a forked branch from a native tree or bush. Says it works better. Grasping the slender ends in each hand he holds it out in front with the Y pointing away from him. Then he walks slowly back and forth over the area where someone hopes to sink a well. Suddenly he stands still.

"There she goes," he shouts, as the stick begins to point down. "Look at it! I can't hold it! There's water down there. Wherever the sticks point, there's water, be it rainy Illinois or dry Arizona."

Scientific doubts of such a statement were offered as early as the 17th Century. Yet, there are an estimated 25,000 dowsers in the United States today. A recent study of the phenomenon "proves" that the power of the divining rod is mere foolery: Anthropologist Evan S. Vogt and psychologist Ran Hyman, a General Electric consultant, came up with the explanation suspected by others—that the dowser grips the twig so tightly for such a long period that finally he is forced to relax, and somehow this reflex action points the stick down.

But Adams doesn't grip the stick tightly for long periods. Sometimes it indicates water after he walks only a few seconds. And at that spot he





can lay the willow down, then pick it up, and immediately it points toward the ground.

He claims no occult powers. Suggestions of extra-sensory perception leave him cold. But he knows what he knows—where the sticks point if a well is sunk there's water. Now something has happened that may offer a solution. It came about when he was using what he claims is a new talent.

When he hit Arizona, the gold bug bit him, raising a fever from which he has never recovered and luring him over miles of wasteland in the belief that veins of precious metals awaited those who sought them. But where? He hadn't much patience with the ordinary prospector's haphazard chipping of rock. Wilson Adams demanded a more certain method. And what could be better than two white sticks in the hands of a water witch? He claims to be able to find precious metals with it.

Does that make him a gold witch?

Perhaps the most bewitching thought is that he can find radium. Therein may lie the solution to this most perplexing of riddles. Radiation, still comparatively unknown, has earned the limelight of scientific study during Adams' 70 years. It was by chance that he came into contact with it.

He got himself two white sticks and crossed them at one end. On the cross he tied a small cloth bag that held a bit of rock containing gold. Then he started out, walking over the mountain on which he had staked a claim. Straight out in front he held the sticks, like a drummer in a home-town parade. Marching, marching. Suddenly the sticks bent downward. Excitedly, he sought the exact spot where the pull was strongest. While he searched, a man approached.

"What you got there?" the newcomer demanded.

"Sticks. I can find gold with them."

"The hell you say. We'll just see

about that. I've got a detector. I'm going to get it." And the man stalked off toward his truck.

Soon he was back with a metal detector, approaching the spot where Adams stood grinning. Sure enough. As the stranger neared the spot, the instrument started its telltale click—right where the magic sticks indicated gold.

"Well, what do you know?" Adams laughed. "Your fool contraption works!"

"Say, how the devil do you do that?" the man asked.

Adams' eyes glinted with pleasure. "Here, you try it," he said, releasing his stick. "They talk to a man."

But they won't talk to everyone. You can, however, participate by placing your hands over Adams' as the sticks are bending down toward the ground. His hands convey to yours a tingling sensation, much like the vibrations of the old-time electric-shock machine.

Other dowser's hands convey the same power. In California, a water witch who has located over 1000 wells, shows the same vibrating of his hands when another's are placed over them. Writer Gaston Burrige went to investigate. He tried to water witch, but couldn't even get a spook out of the sticks. Then, with the dowser's hands lightly over his, the sticks started down. Burrige gripped them mightily, determined not to let them bend down—and one branch broke off, he claims.

There's something more about Adams' hands. When they come near a Geiger counter, it starts clicking, suggesting that he himself might be radio-active. Could this have something to do with his powers of witchery? Might it be dependent on a particular quality of radiation in his body?

"I don't know about that," says his wife, Grace. "I've known Wilson for 58 years and I still don't know when to believe him. If he can find gold with those little sticks, why was he talking about selling his trailer to get money to buy a metal detector?"

And, so the mystery goes. Some claim they can divine for gold, some for water, others for both. Whatever, it sparks a man's imagination and challenges science to solve a mystery. Only one thing is sure. Anyone can witch for gold. Just get some sticks and start tramping. The gold you find may not be metal, but you'll keep that zestful zip that feeds the fountain of youth. Who could ask for a greater bonanza!

///



# The Trigo's Fallen Arch

by CHORAL PEPPER

**I** THOUGHT of another jungle—of a steaming, hot creeping mahogany forest in Central America where our train paused every mile or so while dark-skinned natives cut away roots overgrowing the tracks. But this was different. This was a jungle in the desert! Instead of mahogany, teak and orchids, we pushed through tamarisk, bamboo and spidery nets woven through great crowded trees growing horizontally along the ground.

Protecting his eyes with a camera, Jack squeezed among branches that snapped against the car. In a narrow dirt road he held a light meter into heavy shadows and focused. Then he ducked back into his seat.

"What's your hurry?" I asked.

"Noises," he answered, looking sheepish. I opened my window and knew what he meant. Unseen wings

swished in the foliage. Crackles, whines, whirrs and buzzes haunted the black shadows. It wasn't like any desert ought to be. And very shortly it reached an end.

We were following the Colorado River north of Yuma. Our narrow, dirt road had passed from a public camp ground amid palo verde groves into naked sunbaked hills. We opened the gate of the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge and drove through a melee of chalk mountains and lava boulders. The roughest part of our trip lay ahead. We were looking for the Lost Arch Mine!

Lost mine aficionados will ridicule a search for the Lost Arch on the east side of the Colorado, but not so authorities like Erle Stanley Gardner. It was he who, indirectly, stimulated this trip. DESERT readers will recall a letter to the Editor from N. T. Jackson of Calipatria, California,

published in October '64. In this letter, which Mr. Jackson requested we forward to Erle Stanley Gardner, he suggested that a mine he had come upon in the Trigos two years ago might be the famous Lost Arch Mine referred to in Gardner's book, *The Desert Is Yours*, parts of which appeared in DESERT, December '63. At the time of the Jackson letter, Mr. Gardner was occupied with other matters, but took the idea seriously enough to suggest that DESERT institute a first-hand investigation.

Even so, we hesitated. The saga of the Lost Arch has been told and retold in past issues of DESERT, as well as in a number of books. Half-heartedly we riffled through our old photo files. But we didn't remain half-hearted very long. Gardner was surprised to discover two arches when he explored the Turtle Mountains to gather material for his book, either



one of which may have held the secret of the lost lode. Our files revealed *three* arches, each attributed to the Lost Arch Mine legend. And none of our three resembled his two! With that, we took a closer look. What of these numerous arches, we asked ourselves? Which arch, if any, is *the* arch?

Further research proved only one thing. The Lost Arch Mine has more faces than Eve. In addition to natural arches, one famous legend described a man-made one—an adobe arch erected to connect two huts occupied by the Mexicans who discovered and worked the mine. Diversion doesn't end there. In another version, its discoverer was an American named Amsden and in still others, a pair of prospectors named Crocker and Fish. Then, again, a German naturalist named Kohler was to guide a prospector named Packer to the famous arch, but met with a fatal accident en route. These are only a few of the fables that shroud the Lost Arch Mine. In addition, its location has been variously reported in the Turles, in the Old Woman Mountains and in the Whipples—all of California.

So what provocation have we to consider it in the Trigo Mountains on the Arizona side of the Colorado River? Very little, other than the fact that in Gardner's version the discoverer, named Fish, expired in Ehrenberg where his partner had taken him for medical attention a few days following his rich discovery. If Fish had been wandering down the west bank of the Colorado, thirst-maddened and half-dead with exposure, why, then, didn't they seek medical help in Blythe on the California side? Why would they take the time to ferry the river to Ehrenberg? Furthermore, who can prove they were wandering down-river rather than up; or on the west bank rather than the east? In those days a canny prospector didn't disclose even the approximate location of a rich placer before he'd staked and recorded his claim.

Considering all, only one factor comes through loud and clear: there was an arch in conjunction with the lost rich vein. This, of course, was a safe enough revelation on the part of its discoverer. In those days any prospector hardy enough to mount a burro knew that the Turtle, Whipple and Old Woman ranges were lousy with arches.

So now we come to the Jackson theory. The mine he came upon in the Trigos was near the famous old Clip Mine. The reason he suspicion-



ed it might have had an association with the Lost Arch Mine is because it had caved in at the top and the formation that appears to have once formed an arch is a V-shaped slit. Mr. Jackson suggests that this change in structure might have resulted in the loss of the rich vein's identifying landmark.

The only way to settle the matter was to go up and take a look. This we did, and it turned out to be our most exciting desert adventure to date.

It was late afternoon when the road drew close to the river about 25 miles north of Yuma and we found ourselves in the jungle. Unable to turn around and return to the campground in the reserve, we pushed on. Happily, the jungle was short lived and soon opened into a wide wash where smoke trees mingled with mesquite and palo verde and even a paradoxical saguaro shot up here and there.

Somewhere in this area — between 20 and 48 miles above Yuma — a Swiss Consul traveling aboard the

stern-wheeler Cocopah that carried freight to and from mining camps along the Colorado in 1878, reported a mountain called "Pot Hole" on which were found remains of ancient habitations, fine pottery and strange weapons indicative of a civilization far more advanced than that of the Indians found there by white man. "There are rich gold mines in this mountain," Francis Berton continued, writing in his diary, "and in only a few days two Americans found a pocket containing about \$7000 in large nuggets."

References are vague concerning this mountain. There is a hill on the California side near Laguna Dam which old-timers refer to as the pot-holes, but to thirsty prospectors any location containing rock basins deep enough to hold rain water was likely to acquire such a name and there were potholes on each side of the river. To further complicate matters, the river changed its course a number of times before dams were constructed. Yuma was once on the California side! The Pot Hole Mountain described by the Honorable Francis



*Above: Jack hears loud beeps on his metal detector*

*Below: Robert Carr and friends tell author of their work at the Kathy D Mine.*



Berton appears to have been on the Arizona shore one autumn day in 1878. Where it is now, no one knows.

We noticed a charcoal lighter-fluid can hanging from a limb opposite a trail to the left. Hoping it indicated a good camp spot, we followed the trail up a hill and then down to a willow-edged lagoon. We would liked to have camped in this tiny cove with its sandy beach, but thoughtless campers had left such a mess of cans and junk that we stopped only long enough for a quick swim.

Back on the main road, we camped on a knoll beside Indian Wash and cooked dinner while the sun dropped behind the Trigos. Activity increased during the night, but it wasn't human activity. A family of raccoons raided our trash box and at dawn a braying burro awakened us. But our greatest thrill in the wildlife department occurred while sausage sizzled over the fire and the aroma of coffee spread far and wide. A mother doe and her fawn crept timidly from a cover of sagging mesquite and wandered so close to us that Jack accused

them of begging coins to model for photos. When I approached them with my camera, however, they evaporated into an arroyo.

A few diggings scar the hills on each side of the road, but the most exciting remnant of early mining in the Eureka district today exists in a legend. It was here in Yuma Wash, while hiking between Red Cloud Mine to the north and La Fortuna to the south, that prospector John Nummel rested in the shade of a palo verde tree and enjoyed a swig of water from his canteen. More from habit than anticipation, he hammered a chunk of yellow quartz from a nearby ledge. To his utter astonishment, it shone with free gold. Not equipped to take advantage of the strike and, for reasons of his own, not wishing to return immediately to the Red Cloud, he pocketed the ore and proceeded to La Fortuna where he hoped to make enough money to develop his mine later. However, when the eventful day arrived, his golden ledge was nowhere to be found. All we Peppers can add to this saga is that there are a heck of a lot of palo verde trees in Yuma Wash!

We were reveling in the wonderful quiet of the desert when Trent called our attention to a radio antenna towering above a hill to our left. Curious, we followed a pair of tracks around the low hill and into a wash. There, appearing too suddenly for us to withdraw unobserved, stalked two men with holstered guns strapped around their hips. Jack stopped the car and approached on foot, relieved, I think, to see smiles on their faces. We joined them in the shade of their canopy to await three members of their party with whom they were in communication by radio—a system so elaborate we accused them of having the whole desert wired for sound.

Soon the others arrived, dropped ore samples into a bucket and took long drinks of water from a huge tank they'd brought in by trailer. Robert Carr of Yuma, owner of the Kathy D Mine in Black Rock Wash, explained that the other prospectors were friends who joined him weekends to help work his claims. They hoped to take enough gold from washes to finance a silver mining operation.

Actually, in partnership with a California man, Carr has 15 claims in the Arizona Silver District, some of which he hopes to sell. But first he feels they must prove mining today is profitable—which accounts for his complex communications system. Whereas in the old days it wasn't

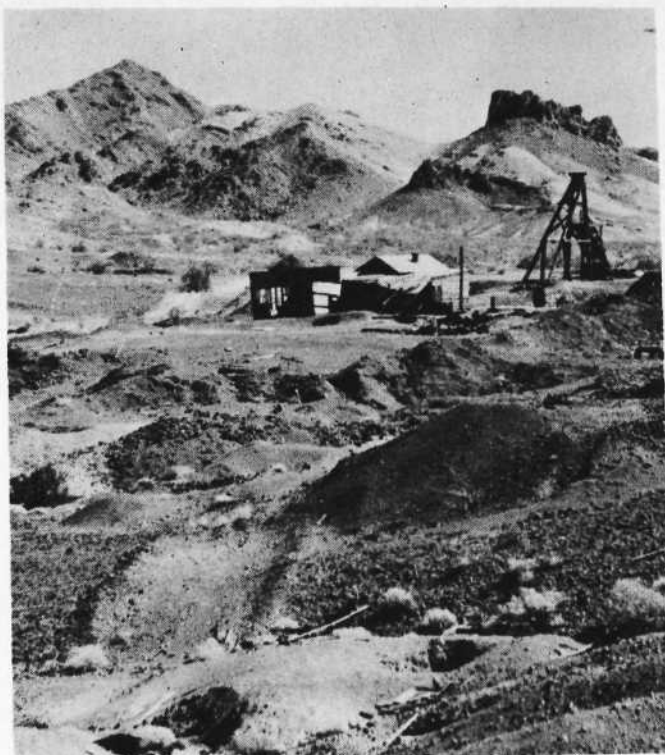


*Right: Red Cloud mellows into the landscape today. Below: Only impressive remain of early grandeur.*

safe for a miner to work isolated areas alone, with a walkie-talkie radio system, a man can be in constant touch with workers or supervisors and two claims can be worked simultaneously with only two men. Lou Monroe, a hobby-pro prospector in the radio business, set up the system for Carr and expects it to pay for itself in gold dust. Visitors are welcomed to this camp, especially while its owner has a few claims to sell!

Back on the main road, which reminded us of Baja's Highway No. 1, we joggled north among a series of shafts designated on our old mining map as the Black Rock, Silver Glance and Papago mines. The country grew more rugged as we progressed, although Carr's party reported that they'd driven as far as Red Cloud in late model passenger cars.

Jack stopped at a fathomless cavity we pegged as the Black Rock mine to see if our Goldak detector would register any minerals still underground. During productive days, Silver District produced over a million dollars worth of ore, but miners weren't as thorough then as they could be with modern equipment today. Judging from Jack's reaction when he tuned-in his ear phones, the old-timers overlooked plenty! This metal locator, incidentally, is different from those we have used on other trips. This one is gauged to react to minerals 20 feet or more underground and which cover an area of a foot or more in diameter. Models more sensitive, but less strong, are designed to detect smaller items, such as relics and coins, buried in shallow graves. Each model has its own advantages, depending upon what the seeker seeks.



Our next stop was Red Cloud mine about two miles north. Ruins from World War II structures contrast grimly with those of the 1880s. Red Cloud died twice—once in 1890, again in 1949. The more recent structures, flimsily built, resemble temporary movie sets, but the substantial remains of older ones speak of an erstwhile hope for an everlasting bonanza.

Overlooking this ghost town, once named Silent, are the broken walls of what probably represented the finest dwelling in town. Protuding above a mound of sand, graceful posts of a once-elegant brass bed created a mystery. We recognized them as an identical facsimile of a bedstead we'd seen in a photo taken many years ago by former DESERT

writer Harold Weight when he visited an old cabin occupied by the same John Nummel of lost gold fame. Mr. Nummel was at one time a caretaker for the Red Cloud, but lived away from the property in a cabin on his own homestead near Norton's Landing.

Staggered along an opposite ridge from this ruin are foundations of houses dug into hillsides, with only their facades built of stone. Everywhere are scattered masses of weathered siding—the wind-strewn remains of a wide roof that once covered La Cantina Plata, an old store-saloon described by Nell Murbarger in *Ghosts of the Adobe Walls*.

Silent, established in 1879 and named for Judge Charles Silent, was





*A-frame dwelling of North Geronimo miner.*

later renamed Pacific City. In addition to its function as a trading center for the mines in the vicinity, it also provided a way-station on the Yuma-Ehrenberg stage run. A small smelter was built in the 1880s, but was unsuccessful and closed after about three years. Rusting into oblivion and lying within a circumference of several miles, equipment of various ages and models rattles in the desert wind, a requiem to times that will never live again.

It wasn't our intention to camp at the Red Cloud, but after following

several wrong roads in search of the Clip Mine, we returned there for our second night. One of these fiascos carried us to Norton's Landing. This we didn't regret, although the 14-mile round trip through Red Cloud Wash (for 4-wheel drive vehicles only) was time-consuming. The scenery was beautiful, but the old wagon road was so faint we kept thinking of Walter Nelson, the Red Cloud Mine's last caretaker whose lifeless body was found in this wash beside his sand-bogged car in 1955.

An earlier tragedy occurred in 1884

*Trent scouts ahead on his Burrito to look for old road.*



when a flood of the Colorado destroyed 30 Red Cloud company houses and threatened the smelter at Norton's Landing. Today's only remnant of this once busy port where river boats docked to load ore is a tiny building constructed of willows. Damming of the Colorado has so changed the river's channel that Norton's Landing is now far inland and hardly worth taking the time to visit.

Our second wrong route led to the Dives Mine. Instead of turning onto Norton's Landing road, since it had misled us on our first attempt, we continued along the main road leading north from the Red Cloud Mine. Wash-outs rendered it impassable within a half-mile or so of a huge mill hanging precariously on the edge of a mountain above rainbow-tinted tailings. The mill appeared to be in reasonably good condition. To explore it, however, would require some mountain climbing and road building.

In this area, I must admit, we came upon the first desert land I've ever interpreted as "mean." Perhaps it was an array of bleached bones—some with hoofs of burro still intact, others fleshless arcs of ribs—barricading the approach to Dives. Or, perhaps it was a narrow canyon road to the right that trapped us in a cul de sac of sunless, yawning lairs. Whatever it was, this portion of desert is not for me. I love long, naked vistas, uncompromising light and shadow, subtle colors and unconventional flora. To me, desert terrain is uncomplicated and honest. There's nothing devious about life that stands forth to be counted, alone, uncluttered, protected only by an ability to adapt and a determination to survive.

And that's why this section of desert struck me as "mean." There were no long vistas. It was treacherous, dark and confining. And I'm sure a vicious wild cat lurked in each black lair. We backed out of the deadend canyon as fast as we could and returned to Red Cloud Mine to camp.

At dawn we again studied our maps. It was just possible that the original turnoff to the Clip Mine road had washed away and we could pick it up at another point. Trent scooted ahead on his Burrito—a small but sturdy trail bike with an extra-wide rear tire for negotiating sand—and soon found where an old road turned from the main one and dropped into a deep, jagged wash. We waited while he crossed the wash, reappeared on the opposite side and then disappeared behind a bluff. Soon he came charging up the main road toward us. He'd found where





*Shallow diggings at Mendeil looked recent.*

the old Clip Mine road crossed the Norton's Landing road in Red Cloud Wash—only 7/10 of a mile from the Dives fork on the main road.

This illusive junction is in an area of particularly deep sand. After a short distance the road firms up, however, but instead of sand, it's then buried under boulders. Here, again, a 4-wheel drive vehicle is necessary, in addition to an experienced driver and a determined wife! Jack said later he'd never have undertaken it without an accompanying car if we hadn't had Trent's Burrito for supplementary transportation.

Along this route we passed several old mines. The South Geronimo, what there is of it, sits on a plateau out of sight above the Norton's Landing junction and is difficult to reach, but the North Geronimo is alongside the road. Its main attraction is an A-frame building with a roof that slants to the ground and a peaked ceiling barely high enough to accommodate a man. This sort of architecture was contrived not for fashion, but to conserve wood by the elimination of side walls. A trestle-table inside provided both work and eating space and paths cleared among desert-varnished stones outside indicated a tidy housekeeper with time to spare.

Two miles further, after squeezing through narrow passes, negotiating washed-out roads and removing a number of boulders from the road, we climbed a hill. There, across a narrow valley and atop an opposite mountain, loomed a very respectable fully rounded arch. Also, tucked into a stone cairn at a junction with another trail was a wooden slat upon which had been written in pencil,

*Clip Wash left — Revelation Mine right.*

It was the Revelation Mine we sought, but we hadn't expected to find a sign pointing the way. The direction to the "broken arch" given by Mr. Jackson in his letter placed it in the vicinity of the Clip Mine and directly above the Revelation Mine. We were getting close, but this wasn't a "broken" arch, so we turned right and, to our surprise, came upon another sign. This one looked fairly new and read, *Revelation Mine. No Trespassing.*

Well, we hadn't come all this way for nothing, so we trespassed along the road, ignoring an offshoot to the left where we could see distant ruins of the Clip Mine, and continued on until we arrived at the foot of a steep, serpentine incline. It might have been possible to climb this by auto, but the risk was great.

"I'm game for a hike if you are," Jack challenged. So we filled a canteen from our water jug and set forth in the noonday sun. At the mountain's crest we stopped to rest and commiserate upon the view. Not that it wasn't thrilling, but another incline fully as lofty as the one we'd just climbed lay across a narrow ravine and the trail led straight up its perpendicular side. Two hills were more than we'd bargained for, but so were two arches! There, towering directly before us, was another arch—just as round and perfectly formed as the one we'd passed at the Clip Wash junction.

"Oh boy," I muttered, "just wait 'til we tell *this* to Uncle Erle!" But

that wasn't the only thing that mystified us. Before precipitating our mission, we'd checked with Arizona's Department of Mineral Resources at Phoenix and learned that the Revelation claim was held by a gentleman from Yuma named H. L. Duty, but to the department's knowledge, had never produced nor was it currently being worked.

Nevertheless, signposts of fairly recent vintage indicated some sort of visitation and shallow diggings on the adjacent hill piqued our curiosity. The old mining map we carried showed a claim called the Mendeil adjoining the Revelation. We were not certain as to which claim the recent diggings belonged and, look as we might, we couldn't see anything resembling a broken arch to identify the latter.

After much huffing and puffing and resting, it occurred to us that the broken arch might be tucked behind a mountain crag and invisible from our point of view. The only solution was to march on! Going downhill into the ravine was easy, but the sun didn't grow any cooler and by the time we'd reached the crest of the next mountain our only goal was to crawl into a shady cave. Had a wild cat lurked there, I'd have said, simply, "Move over."

Trent broke out the canteen and we sprawled in the mouth of the cave shelter until we'd built up enough steam to face the up and down trail back to our car. Jack examined shallow trenches that looked newly dug, but there were no other signs that activity had transpired since the

*Jack finds rare old beer bottle at Clip Mine*





*Trent and Jack climb hill below V-slit of Revelation Mine. Right: Only from this perspective can both the arch and slit be seen.*

Mendevil claim was surveyed for patent in 1887—if, indeed, this were the Mendevil. It was at this stage of speculation that "Revelation" struck us.

"Look!" Jack pointed to the top of a mountain wedged into a gully directly south of the first hill we'd climbed. At its base were shallow diggings similar to ones we'd just examined, but at its peak was a prominent split. A jumble of rocks spilled down its face from the V-shaped crevice.

As we climbed the winding road, it gradually faded behind the mountain we ascended. This, we were confident, was Mr. Jackson's broken arch and the negligible diggings below it, the Revelation Mine. The more extensive trenches on the second mountain belonged to the Mendevil.

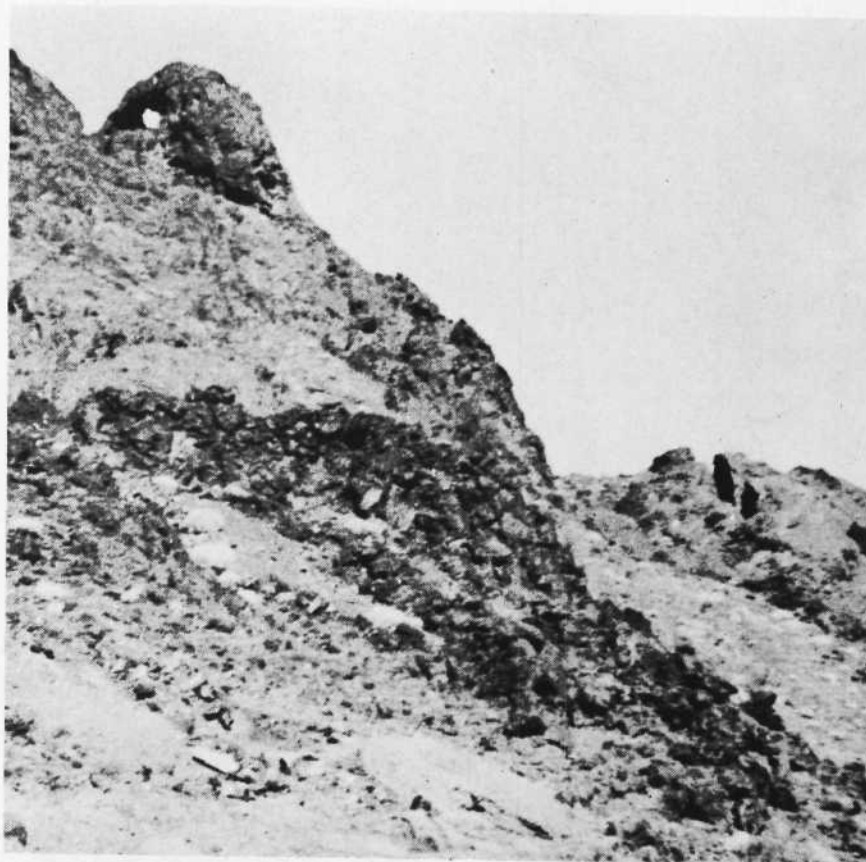
The split was not apparent from

its base on the side where our car was parked, nor even from the peak of the first incline which sheltered it. Whether the formation was due to erosion or the result of early prospecting we couldn't ascertain from a distance. The Clip and other mines in the district were worked for lead-silver at a time when this metal was more coveted than gold, so Mr. Jackson's suggestion that gold had been overlooked in favor of silver could be true, but whether or not this formation once formed an arch is questionable. When bridged, if ever it was, I believe it would have more closely resembled a needle's eye.

It is understandable that Mr. Jackson would have used this distinctive formation to identify the Revelation Mine. But that Mr. Fish of the Lost Arch Mine legend would have identified his golden outcropping with a landmark so unobtrusive and dubious an arch when a perfectly good one visible from great distances towered beside it, is unlikely. He might have confided to his partner that the gold lay in the vent of a needle's eye, but then the legend would concern a lost needle instead of a lost arch.

I'm afraid we're going to have to pass on this one. Like its California neighbors, Arizona's Trigo Mountains are overly endowed with arches. As far as we Peppers are concerned, the Lost Arch stays lost in the Turtles!

///







# LEE'S LOST LODE

by  
RETTA E. EWERS

*Cottonwood Springs*

SOMEWHERE NEAR the Old Woman Springs, perhaps midway between Yucca and Victorville, a lost mine awaits a lucky wanderer. And lucky he'll have to be, for legitimate records are vague.

Musty archives in the San Bernardino Court House give the following waybill: *The White Metal Mine, located by G. Lee 5 miles N. of the Lone Star Mine. Located N.E. of Bear Valley, (Big Bear) April 5, 1879. San Bernardino County, California.*

Lost mine tale-spinners have added embellishments. Some refer to Lee's Lost Lode as one of gold, but I challenge this. At the time his claim was

recorded, silver was at the height of production and considered as valuable as gold. It was usually referred to as "white metal."

Another event in Lee's life indicated a preoccupation with silver. It was he who discovered the famous silver deposit of Red Mountain two miles north of Barstow and known as the Pencil Lead Mine. Subsequently, these claims were appropriated by the same Robert W. Waterman who succeeded Washington Bartlett as governor of California after the latter's death in 1887.

Dispossessed of the Pencil Lead Mine, Lee struck across the desert in

search of another. Soon he returned to Barstow to report a fabulous new vein, carrying samples to prove it. He'd build his family a house with door knobs and steps of solid silver, he boasted!

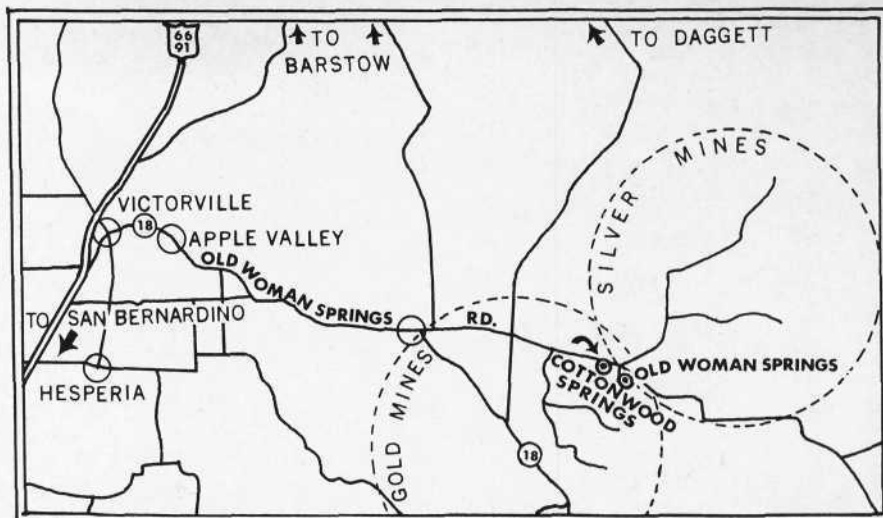
For this venture, he assumed a partner—a crippled assayer from Los Angeles who was bound to a wheel chair. Lee, who refused to divulge his mine's location to anyone else, tried to persuade Stewart to visit it, but the exertion seemed beyond the invalid's capabilities and Stewart refused. He did, however, insist that Lee take a friend along on his behalf. In this event lies our only workable clue.

The two men, traveling in a light buckboard, reached Old Woman Springs in the heat of day. It was mid-summer, so they remained there to water their animals and rest in the shade until shadows began to lengthen.

At 3:00 P.M. they started out again and traveled slowly for nearly three hours. At that time Lee called a halt and said they'd stop for the night. While his companion was occupied with setting up camp, Lee disappeared. At 9:00 P.M. he returned with a bag of ore samples. These he refused to display, however. Stewart might trust his friend, but Lee didn't!

On another trip into this region Lee again disappeared—for good. Lee had lived with a man named Brown on the banks of the Mohave River. One morning, pack on back, Lee announced that he was going to make a trip to his mine. Brown watched him depart and then returned to his work. These trips were legion. Brown knew Lee'd return when he was ready.

On this trip, Lee reached Old Woman Springs and found a man awaiting him. The man was no stranger. cil Lead Mine.



Hoffman, supplied with a plentiful quantity of whiskey, proceeded to offer Lee a drink. And then another. As they polished off the bottle, Hoffman recognized him as an old desert rat named Hans Hoffman who was reputed to be a henchman of Waterman's. Lee immediately became suspicious. It occurred to him that Waterman and his partner, Bodie, had conspired to have Hoffman tail him to the location of his new discovery so they could take it over during his absence, as they had his Pen-

man queried Lee about his silver deposit. Lee was foxy and, remaining sober enough to retain his caution, refused to divulge the location of his mine.

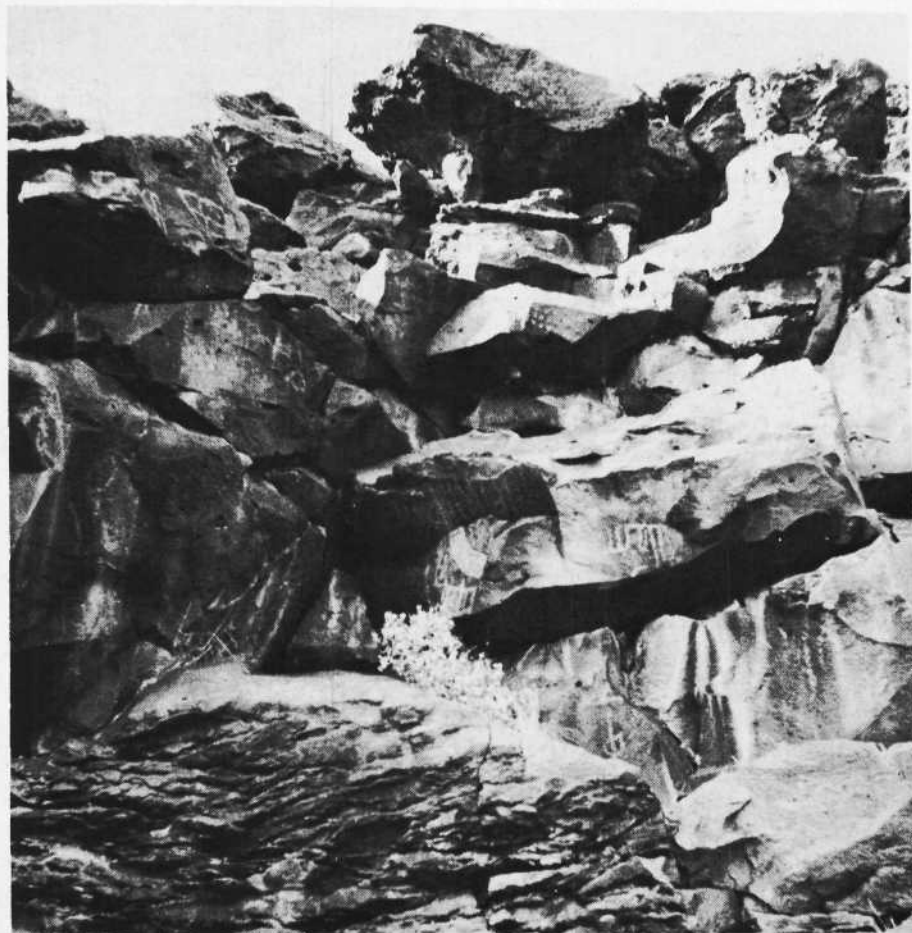
At this, Hoffman grew abusive. In a frenzy he struck Lee over the head with a heavy rock, killing him instantly. Frightened by what he'd done, Hoffman sobered enough to dig a shallow grave for Lee's body. He then built a fire over the spot to erase signs of fresh digging.

While Hoffman was so engaged, two men approached on horseback. Hoffman appeared so nervous and evasive that the men became suspicious and demanded to know what he was hiding. After contributing a fresh supply of whiskey to the cause, they wormed the murder secret from him—along with an explosive fact. They learned that Hoffman had been given \$500 to either uncover Lee's secret mine or kill him trying. And they learned from Hoffman's boasting that the donor of the bribe was no other than Robert Waterman!

After Hoffman showed the men where he'd buried the body, he staggered to his blanket and fell asleep. The men, meanwhile, leaped to their horses and raced to San Bernardino to report the murder to Sheriff John Buckhart. They also told others, for the news traveled to Barstow from whence Waterman sent forth a group of gunmen to Old Woman Springs, hoping to intercept the posse from San Bernardino in time to effect Hoffman's escape. The Sheriff got there first, however, and Hoffman was arrested and taken to the San Bernardino jail.

Waterman's stake in the trial was great. He hired the best lawyer available to represent Hoffman and thus began one of the toughest and longest court battles on record in San Bernardino County. It lasted from 1880

*Lava beds north-east of Old Woman Springs carry signs of prehistoric Indian visits, but few of mining activity.*





through 1881. Five witnesses for the defense swore that the body was that of an Indian squaw who had been kicked to death by a horse, but Lee's dentist swore that the teeth of the dead person were those of the murdered man who, as his patient, demanded that his cavities be filled with silver from his own holdings. Another convincing factor lay in Lee's great height—over six feet, whereas most Indian squaws of this region were short and squat. At the end of the first trial, the jury voted 11 for conviction, one for acquittal.

A second trial ensued with the same results. Citizens swore that Waterman employed a paid juryman on the panel to cause a hung jury. A recess was called. While awaiting the Court's decision for a third trial, Waterman's lawyers succeeded in obtaining Hoffman's release on \$15,000 bail. He immediately disappeared and was never heard from again.

Waterman's troubles were not over yet. Lee's heirs sued him and won a judgment for \$300,000. Waterman's own brother, to whom he had sold one-third interest in the Pencil Lead Mine, without securing it in writing, also sued him, as Waterman refused to acknowledge the transaction. In the process of trial, the brother died, but his heirs continued the suit and eventually collected their third interest.

After all this Waterman was elected Lieutenant-Governor of the state, so undoubtedly there were ramifications which justified his reported questionable ethics. Also, there are some indications that Lee might have abandoned his Pencil Lead Mine and later had a change of heart. In the meantime, Lee's lost lode remained lost.

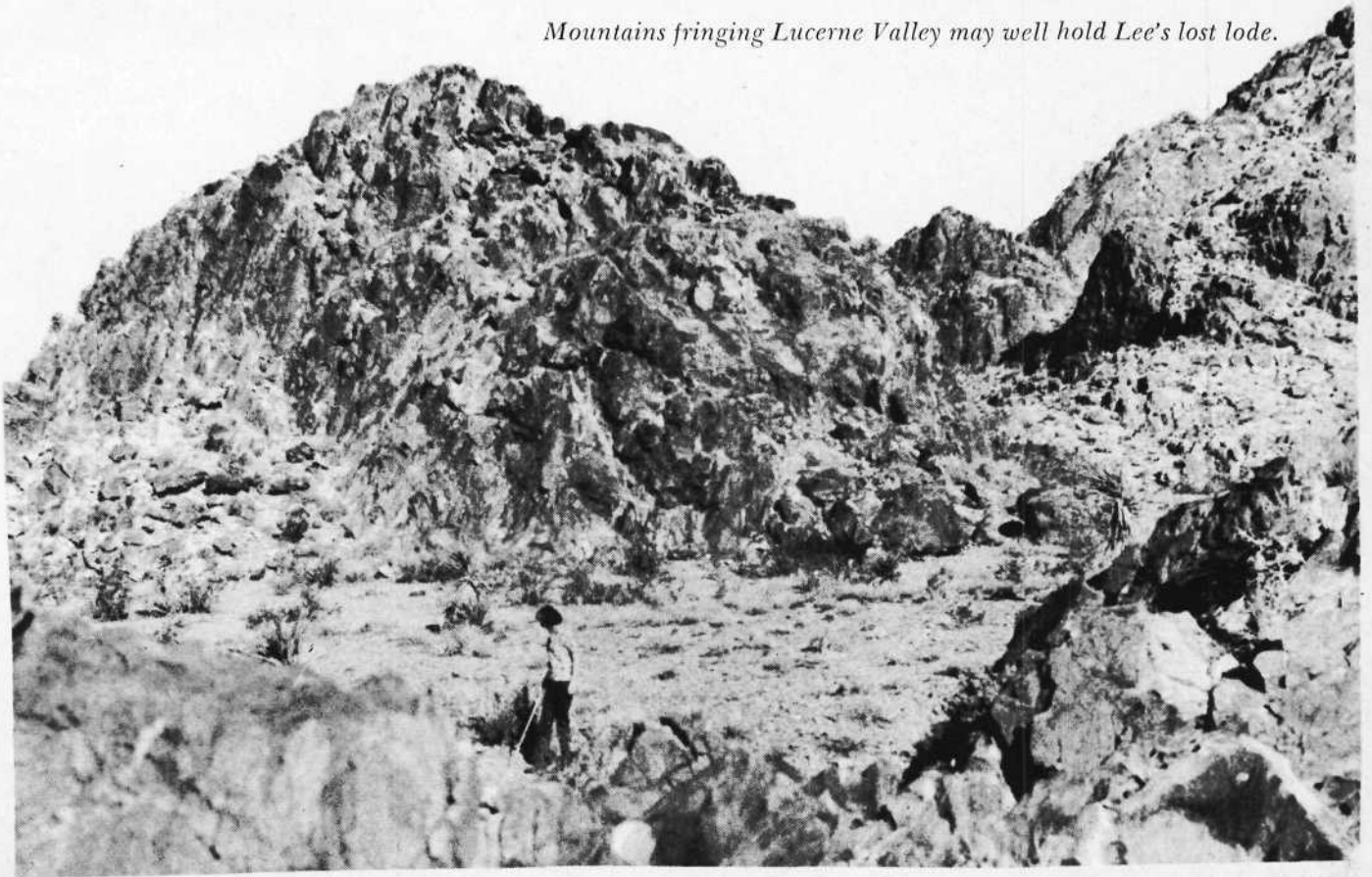
There is one bold clue overlooked by those who have written about this lost mine. Old Woman Springs is the only recognizable launching spot from which to conduct a search. However, today's Old Woman Springs, located on private property, is about one mile east of the original Old Woman Springs. Col. Henry Washington named the original oasis Old Woman Springs in 1855 when he was running a base line survey in the district. Much later this oasis was renamed Cottonwood Spring, the name it bears today. Al Swarthout, a rancher, developed water to the east of the original oasis by drilling into rock. He then appropriated the name of the old oasis for his new location. Thus, in figuring the time element entailed in Lee's three-hour buckboard ride to the spot where he established a camp with Stewart's friend, the route should be judged from the present Cottonwood Springs, rather than from the present Old Woman Springs.

As far as other clues are concerned, it takes a lot of imagination to make anything of them. Old mining maps in my possession do not show a location by the name of Lone Star Mine, as was recorded in relation to Lee's White Metal Mine. Most published material referring to this lost lode gives serious consideration to an area about 15 miles east of the Spring where a graded road to Barstow travels closely east and south of a small range of hills and access into them is easy.

Other lost mine detectives start with already proven mines in a given area and work out from them. About 15 miles east of the Springs is the Blue Ribbon Silver Mine, but an even hotter spot might be found along an existing trail lying west and south of Cottonwood Springs and leading to the old Akron-Silver Reef Mines. The Santa Fe and Lester Gold mines were also located in this general area, so the dubious possibility that Lee's lost lode was gold instead of silver must not be completely discounted.

Lucerne Valley's desert community encompasses some exciting terrain for rock collectors as well as for lost mine seekers. It may be the former, collecting verde antique, agate and jasper, who will accidentally wrest a secret from the land that neither whiskey nor man would wrest from Lee. ///

*Mountains fringing Lucerne Valley may well hold Lee's lost lode.*



# It's Never Drab in Moab



by Royce Rollins

**H**ISTORICALLY, MOAB, Utah was a place people went through to get somewhere else. Major Powell passed by on his trek down the Colorado River and a few trappers camped on its bank before Moab became a town. Even early Indians stopped only long enough to trap game and peck a record of visits in a canyon wall.

In 1855 Mormon colonists established the townsite, but it was still more popularly "worked out of" than "in" by cattlemen who gave homey names like Jug Handle and School Marm's Pants to the superbly eroded sandstone monuments on the fringe of town.

In 1922 a miner named Alexander Ringhoffer looked hard at these fantastic formations and dropped his pick. Sensitive enough to recognize them as a greater attraction than a cowboy's "nothin' but a lot of holes in rocks," he prevailed upon Dr. J. W. Williams and Moab newsman "Bish" Taylor to pack into the country and confirm his ecstatic reports.

What the miner had discovered was true—an overwhelming bonanza of Beauty. Thereafter began a long siege to persuade the National Parks Service to establish Arches National Monument.

People still pass through Moab to get somewhere else. But as they pass through today, they linger. And then they return to linger some more. For this vivid Mormon community on U. S. Highway 160 is in the heart of the most exciting scenic country in the world and only with repeated and extended visits can a tourist ever hope to absorb it all.

Our first exploration of Arches National Monument occurred in the wintertime. Perhaps because it was our first; or perhaps because foamy puffs of white snow contrasted surprisingly with pink sand and blue skies, Southeastern Utah has never since appeared more beautiful. At an elevation of 4000 feet, Moab's snowfalls seldom exceed four inches, or linger more than a day. In a cur-

vaceous world of suspended arcs, we followed wildcat, coyote, rabbit, fox and porcupine tracks through the snow, corrupting its primeval purity with our clumsy boots. But it was fun. And terribly beautiful. Crystal prisms sparkled on twigs. Here and there green juniper pointed above snowy billows. Pink sand splashed abstract patterns around arches jet-tisoned three-stories high.

We ran and jumped and rolled in the snow. We were alone in this enchanted land—just my husband, our son and me. No matter what anyone says, wintertime is the best time in Arches National Monument. Headquarters are open all year to give you a quick lesson in the park's curious geology and trails to interesting points are accessible even under a light blanket of snow.

Dress warmly, carry lots of film and be sure to have enough gas in your car. Chances are you'll have both the day and the park to yourself.

///









**BY JACK PEPPER**

publisher, desert magazine

AS WE FLEW over the Colorado Delta headed for Mulege, Erle Stanley Gardner reviewed his expeditions and discoveries made in Baja California during the past years. Since all of us had been on at least one of the previous trips, the briefing was principally for Dr. Carlos Margain, chief anthropologist and archeologist from the Mexican Institute of Archeology.

Dr. Margain's presence was the direct result of a request by Gardner to the Mexican government for a trained scientist to visit the Mulege area to evaluate material we all felt might prove Baja was once inhabited by the earliest man on the American continent. This was the first officially conducted survey of Baja's caves by a Mexican scientist.

Although best known as the creator of Perry Mason, mystery-writer Gardner, or "Uncle Erle" as he is called by his friends, has written five books on Baja resulting from numerous trips into the fascinating country.

Within hours after Gardner received word Dr. Margain could accompany an expedition, he had chartered a plane and rounded up his "Baja crew." Because Choral and I had been on previous trips and written a series of articles (see *DESERT*, May through September, 1964) on Baja, we were also invited. As on all Gardner's Baja trips by air, the chartered plane was piloted by veteran aviator and owner of the Baja Air Service, Francisco Munoz. Others in the group included Sam Hicks, Gardner's "right hand" and ranch manager; J. W. Black, manufacturer of the PakJak and Burrito, two-wheel vehicles that traverse the roughest of country; Ricardo Castillo, Tijuana businessman and amateur archeolo-



gist who spends his spare time exploring Baja, and Joseph Gutierrez, Mexicali businessman and sportsman.

With Dr. Margain's portfolio filled with petroglyph and pictograph information from Gardner's files and from *DESERT*'s, we turned to the immediate object of this trip. On a previous expedition, we explored the caves of Coyote and Conception bays and the larger peninsula which forms

Conception Bay where we found exceptionally old skeletons and artifacts. It was these discoveries that resulted in the present trip.

Our briefing was interrupted when we landed at Bahia de Los Angeles, a popular fishing resort, to feast on lobster and frijoles prepared by Senora Antero Diaz. An hour later we arrived at Mulege and the modern and comfortable Club Aero de Mulege.

That evening business was ignored while we became acquainted with Dr. Margain. He has spent 26 years in the archeological field, speaks five languages, and is a recognized authority on the cultures of Meso America, having participated in the excavations of such sites as Bonampak, Monte Alban and Teotihuacan. But he is also an archeologist with a terrific sense of humor and from the start was sympathetic with the others of our group. As he described both humorous and tragic events which had happened to him during his many years of exploration, I could see Dr. Margain was more than a trained scientist. Using his academic knowledge and well-disciplined mind, he seeks empathy with the people of pre-historic civilizations in order to obtain a greater understanding of their culture.

At midnight we retired, but at dawn we were bouncing south by car toward Coyote Bay. Although it is only a distance of 20 miles, it takes two hours to drive the serpentine route through spectacular desert



*Dr. Margain examines ancient petroglyphs on fallen rock.*



flora and along cliffs rising above sparkling Gulf of California.

Coyote Bay itself can best be described as a Shangri La. Its calm, clear water is filled with fish and the white coral beach curves for several miles, ending on each side with spectacular mountain formations. The land is scattered with palm, palo blanco and elephant trees. Water, a scarce item in Baja, we acquired from a well on the ranch of Manuelo, a gracious host and amigo who cooked two large fish he had caught for our visit.

Surrounding the area are rugged mountains honeycombed with caves. It was in one of these caves, on our previous expedition, that Ricardo found arrowheads, a wooden spear and the bones of a pre-historic man. These and other collections were given to Dr. Margain for future analysis.

At the entrance to Conception Bay, we stopped to show Dr. Margain a number of petroglyphs on boulders. He was immediately impressed with the area, pointing out that kitchen middens and other physical evidence indicated rich archeological discoveries.

His enthusiasm was too much for me. Not waiting for Manuel's roasted fish, I hiked up one of the steep mountains we had decided to explore. Pausing on a cliff high above the bay, I felt lost in time and space—as though I were under a hypnotic spell. If suddenly a prehistoric man had appeared, I would not have been surprised. Time, for a moment, ceased to exist and I was in a world 40,000 years ago.

The first cave I explored was the  
(Continued on Page 36)



*Dr. Carlos Margain, left, and Erle Stanley Gardner examine collection of arrowheads and spears which may date back to the long-headed Pericues.*



*J. W. Black shovels stones out of mysterious cave believed to have been burial place for pre-historic inhabitants of Conception Bay.*



*Believed to have been a site for pre-historic hunters and fishermen, Conception Bay today is still a fisherman's paradise. Richardo Castillo digs in one of dozens of kitchen middens on the bay. They are refuse heaps marking the site of primitive habitation.*

# SERI COUNTRY TODAY

**I**F YOU LOOK at a map of the Sonora side of the Gulf of California, a 100-mile blank from Puerto Libertad to Kino Bay is evident. We knew, from previous trips inland from Hermosillo and Kino Bay and from conversation with the Indians, that there was a road from Puerto Libertad to the Seri Indian village of Desemboque, but no map that we could find gave any indication of its existence.

I guess that off-the-road type people

could be paralleled to mountain climbers who climb because the mountain is there. We like to play explorer and cartographer when we have the chance, and this seemed a perfect opportunity and a good place to test our Volkswagen Transporter with its Corvair conversion.

Ralph Michelson and I decided to make the trip when Ralph mentioned he had a commission from a San Diego museum to make an ethnographic collection from Seris. Our

basic equipment: a Volkswagen Kombi outfitted as a camper and equipped with a 95 HP Corvair engine. This adaptation was accomplished using a standard Volkswagen transaxle joined to the engine by a VolksVair Adaptor Kit. Flotation for soft ground and handling for general road travel had been improved by fitting oversized tires to wide base offset rims. An extra 5-gallon gas tank had been installed in the engine compartment and a couple of Jeep cans





by **TED TREVOR**

photos by

**Ralph Michelsen**

gave us 25 gallon capacity, or about 450 miles of range between gas stations.

After a fast trip from Costa Mesa, California to the Mexican border, we chose Mexican Route 2 which runs from Tijuana through San Luis Sonora and is a high speed paved highway all the way from Tecate to Pitiquito. A comfortable drive of 400 miles from our starting point put us in Sonoita on the Arizona-Sonora border where we stopped to get car and tourist permits. The immigration station here is open 24 hours daily.

Caborca is the last place to stock up on beer, ice, and other staples if you are headed down the back road to Desemboque. It was here that Ralph changed our U. S. money to Mexican money. It was interesting to note that Mexican people doing business in the bank appeared affronted by my dress (overalls). All these people were well dressed and banking was obviously a part of their social life. Work clothes were not looked upon as acceptable garb at the bank.

From Caborca we continued on Route 2 about 10 miles to Pitiquito where we topped off the gas tanks and obtained road information at the Pemex service station. This is the last place to get gas until you return from Desemboque, a round trip of about 230 miles. Turn right at the gas station and wend your way through town as directed. Our illustrated map shows the way to Desemboque. From Pitiquito there is a good graded dirt road to Puerto Libertad and it is possible to go to Libertad first and then to Desemboque, but this could prove confusing on the first trip. The Bamuri through La Cienega route is relatively worry-free and easier to follow.



*The only place in the world where the giant cacti, Cardon and Saguaro, grow side by side.*

Our map shows the route we took. After turning left at Bamuri, the road continues all the way to Desemboque. It is possible to check your position by the mileage gaps between the ranches. Nearly all these ranches are permanently occupied, and if you say the name of the ranch where you think you are to the friendly vaquero, he will either nod affirmatively or indicate the correct direction. Although all the ranches have horses for transportation, we did not see a single car on the road nor at the ranches between Pitiquito and Desemboque.

The desert in every direction is a forest of giant cactus and desert trees. Deer, javelina, coyote, fox, wildcat, and antelope jack rabbit are numerous. This is the only place in the world where the two giant cacti, Saguaro and Cardon, overlap. Roads other than those on our map are practically non-existent, but the 4-wheeler will find hundreds of square miles of virgin territory in every di-

rection. It's no place to go solo without desert survival knowledge and equipment. A reasonable time for the 100 miles from Pitiquito to Desemboque is about 5 hours non-stop.

Much mystery surrounds the history and culture of the Seri Indians. A nomadic, volatile people erroneously reputed to be cannibals, at war with the local Mexican ranchers for decades and finally with the Mexican government, these people fled from the mainland to Tiburon Island to avoid annihilation. In recent years differences with the Mexicans have ceased and the Seris have returned to the mainland to reside at Desemboque, a peaceful bay north of Tiburon Island. They still resist Mexican assimilation and try to carry on their old culture and tradition, but this, we fear, is a losing battle. Ralph noted that on previous trips most of the males and male children had long hair and wore trapos (vestigial loin cloths) over their pants. Today many of the young men have short hair

and wear trousers and sport shirts sans trapos.

In Desemboque, before our vehicle rolled to a stop, it was surrounded by long-haired Seri Indians. These people are primitive, but they have learned that those Gringos who do manage to penetrate their territory are good customers for their excellent baskets and shell beads. They are friendly, dirty, and honest. Children might pick away at your gear out of curiosity, but thievery is very unlikely, even of desirable things left exposed. We lost nothing. Colorful clothing and food are much in demand and make good trade items. A long sleeved red shirt held up in front of the crowd was a sure way to get mobbed by anxious traders. Short sleeved shirts and honest work clothes are virtually worthless for trade, as color is a status symbol outweighing usefulness.

A good Seri plate-shaped basket 18" in diameter is worth about \$5 cash or trade; large bowl-shaped baskets run up to \$50 American money. If you wish to buy, carry small Mexican bills because they are too poor to make change.

The Seri is a culturally distinct tribe in that all the neighboring tribes practice some form of agriculture. The Seri Indians have always been and still are hunters and gatherers. They grow nothing. They have al-

ways been fiercely independent and even now remain relatively pure in blood, with probably less than a dozen individuals of mixed blood. Their extreme devotion to independence and a strong liking for other people's horse meat led to the Mexican wars which reduced their population to 280-odd members from a peak of about 2000. Even now the people of Hermosillo will warn you that it is unsafe to venture into Seri country.

The Mexican fear of the Seri is only equalled by the Seri fear of the Mexican. Many wild and unsubstantiated stories are told of these isolated people, but whatever the Seri reputation, it would certainly be difficult to find a more friendly or good natured people anywhere.

It is a good policy to camp a half mile or more from the village. There is a covered well near the beach west of Desemboque. A few important "don'ts" are: Don't show guns or liquor around the Indians as these are prohibited by Mexican law. Don't go into Desemboque after dark. Those friendly-looking, rib-caged mutts you see wandering all over town by day become a pack of vicious hunters as soon as the sun goes down. Even the Indians stay indoors. And finally, don't forget to bring a present for Roberto, the Indian police department. (Easily spotted by his complete and clean uniform.)

If you're a fisherman, large native dories are available. The motors are generally unreliable so bring your own. Eminently practical—yet procrastinators by nature—the Seris do not bother to caulk their boats. Bailing tomorrow is easier than caulking today!

The village during daylight hours is a beehive of activity. Women make baskets and prepare food in the open



*Bo'otse with red, white and blue decor*

*Baskets made from elephant tree fibre.*

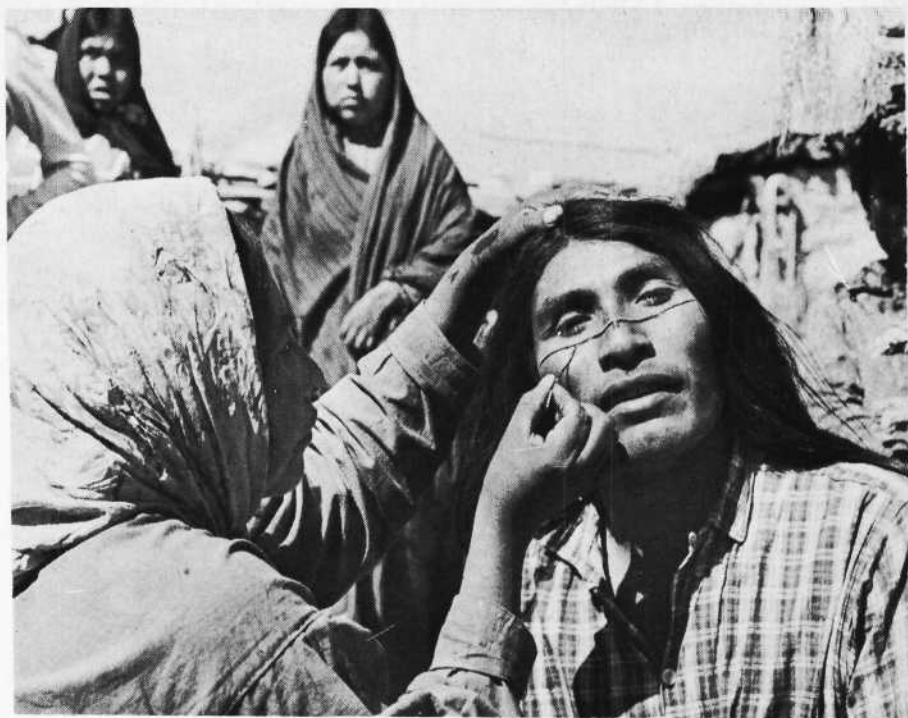




and a pot of clams cooks in front of every hut.

The kids play a volley ball-soccer combination in a circle. The object seems to be to keep the ball moving and fool the next to get it and the whole thing compares favorably with a Harlem Globetrotters basketball game, for skill and comedy. These little kids are probably the dirtiest and happiest in the world. There is obviously no parental attempt to wash faces or wipe noses.

To return north, we turned left at Los Coyotes Ranch, nine miles north of Desemboque. From here to Puerto Libertad you will swear that you are lost all the way. The first short stretch is deceiving because it is fairly smooth sand, after which all hell breaks loose. A side road veering left a few miles past Los Coyotes Ranch ends up in Puerto Libertad also, and is generally used in wet weather. Either road will get you there. It is 30 miles further to Pitiquito by this road to Puerto Libertad, but well worth the trip unless the season is hot. The VolksVair really proved its worth when the going got rough. We had two very rare pieces of pottery for the museum collection and were quite naturally concerned over their safe arrival. Over-sized tires plus the long, smooth Volkswagen suspension carried us in comfort, considering the condition of the roadbed which



*Jose Louis is painted by his wife.*

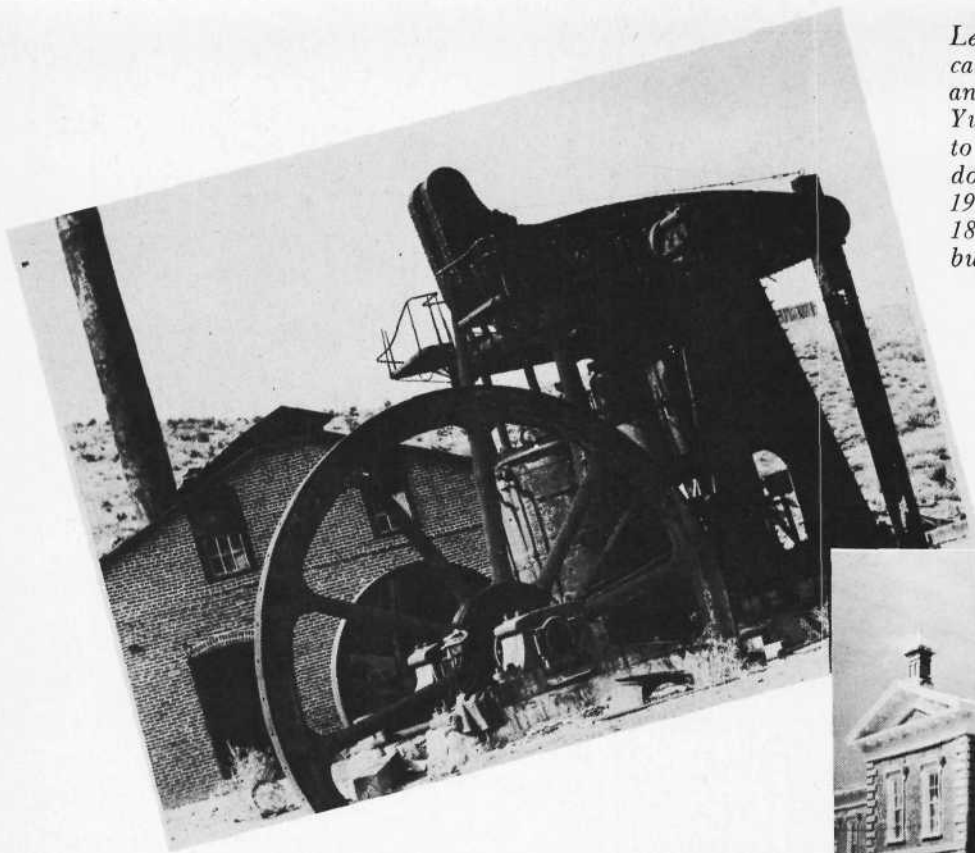
was laced with dips and washes. The extra power from the Corvair engine gave us good acceleration on the short relatively smooth areas of the road, reducing our overall travel time considerably.

After several hours in nowhere, we finally sighted the Gulf of California

and were relieved to find ourselves in Puerto Libertad. From there we flat-tracked over well-graded roads to Pitiquito and civilization with pots and other artifacts intact. Our vehicle had proven its worth and we had fulfilled our ambitions as cartographers—which we hope will be a help to other travelers. ///

*These women are digging clams—a staple of the Seri diet.*





Left: Pump at Grand Central mine came around the Horn from England, and up the Gulf of California to Yuma, then shipped by freight wagon to Tombstone. Pumphouse burned down prior to this photo taken in 1900. Pump originally installed in 1881. Below: Tombstone Court House built in 1882.



## A LEGEND LIVES

by Edna Landin

**T**OMBSTONE, ARIZONA, known as "The Town Too Tough To Die," earned that slogan because it has survived the reverses which made ghost towns of so many of America's mining communities. When President John F. Kennedy introduced his Depressed Area Bill an editorial in an Arizona daily stated, "Why not help Tombstone? It's been depressed since 1890!"

In the old pioneer spirit, however, old-timers who had remained, plus newcomers who represent the largest percentage of its present 1500 population, struggled to keep it alive. Now, justly and with pride, it sets

an example of what can be done without Federal aid.

No city in the world causes more raising of eyebrows when mentioned than Tombstone. Many people doubt that such a town actually exists. Why was it given such a grim name? Naturally, there is an explanation. Located in Apache Indian country, its early pioneers were in constant danger of Indian attack. To offer them protection, Camp Huachuca was established in 1877 about 18 miles southwest of the Tombstone site.

Shortly thereafter a prospector by the name of Ed. Schieffelin, who had

been exploring the northern section of the Arizona Territory, accompanied some recruited Indian scouts to Camp Huachuca, hoping to be more successful in that area. He arrived in April, 1877. Using the camp as a base, Schieffelin scoured the area, but without success. His futile expeditions amused the garrison. "The most you'll find is your tombstone," they jested. Undaunted, he worked his way to the north end of Mule Mountains, only 12 miles from the Apache stronghold. There his faith paid off. He discovered an outcropping of rock rich with silver. Remembering the joshing of the soldiers, he gave the name "Tombstone"

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to his discovery when he filed his claim on September 3, 1877.

That was the beginning of Tombstone. With subsequent discoveries of rich silver ore, it emerged as one of the largest cities of the early West. In January, 1881, Cochise County was created and named after the Apache Indian chief who made peace with the whiteman. Tombstone, with a population of 15,000, was designated county seat.

To increase its water supply, 28 miles of cast-iron-pipe was laid to the Huachuca Mountains. This, today, is still the town's main water source. Ironically, water later drowned Tombstone's hopes for further growth. Millions of dollars of ore had been removed when in 1886, at the 500 foot level, water appeared in the mines and pumping began. Then a disastrous fire destroyed two important surface pumps. As mine shafts filled with water, the mines closed down and the population dwindled. By 1890, Tombstone was almost dead.

In 1901 another effort was made to pump the mines. This appeared successful until 1909, when water penetrated the boilers and extinguished the fires. Again mine shafts flooded and population dwindled.

Tombstone, however, was still the County seat. This kept it alive until 1929, when the honor was moved to Bisbee. Again Tombstone almost died. Population dwindled to less than 400 and it almost reached ghost town status. Then along came World War II and a short period of activity.

In 1945, Tombstone was snatched from the "Death List" by Father Aull, a retired priest who opened a clinic for the treatment of respiratory ailments. Many benefitted and the town was having growing pains when, in 1948, Father Aull died and the clinic closed. Some of the health-seekers remained, however, to profit from Tombstone's healthful climate.

As a further effort to keep the town alive, civic-minded citizens organized a Restoration Commission to preserve historical landmarks. Their

efforts proved successful and in September, 1962, the City was dedicated as a Registered National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service. (This does not involve Federal aid.)

But Tombstone does not live in the past alone. Located on U. S. Highway 80, it attracts motorists who wish to relive, in an authentic natural setting, a bit of the old West. But most important, Western history here is still being made by self-sufficient citizens justly proud of their "Town Too Tough To Die." ///

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# HOMAGE TO THE TUFA

*This greatly misunderstood formation is explained once and for all*

by Albert Ervin Thompson

**F**IRST, ABOUT Nevada: I discovered it, like many other people, while crossing it to get somewhere else. Now, it's hard for me to leave it. In my vacations there, I've never won a dollar, nor lost a dime, but I have gained profound enjoyment.

The wild antelopes of the great Sheldon Refuge, the gem fields of Virgin Valley, the dripstone wonders of Lehman Cave, the exquisite land sculpture of Cathedral Gorge, and the fossil shore features of Walker Lake are among the spectacular, but the call of Nevada does not emanate from the spectacular alone. While driving across the state, you'll discover sublime features whose vastness, simplicity and mystery can convey to your soul unutterable peace and serenity. The charm of raw Nevada is in expansive valleys with gray-green sage and shining playas; in uplifted block mountains of tilted strata, beds of pink rhyolite tuff and frozen flows of black basalt; in broad mountain passes that cut through pigmy woodlands of pinyon and juniper

and in endless highways stretching from horizon to horizon. It is a changing land, as revealed by deserted strands of vanished lakes contouring the mountain ridges, and gully-textured badlands that remind the thoughtful of a basin country long past.

At Fernley, not far from Reno, I once met a friendly Paiute who said, proudly, "Have you been to Pyramid Lake? I'm part owner of it. The lake and all the land around it belongs to my tribe. There are lots of big trout there. You should see it."

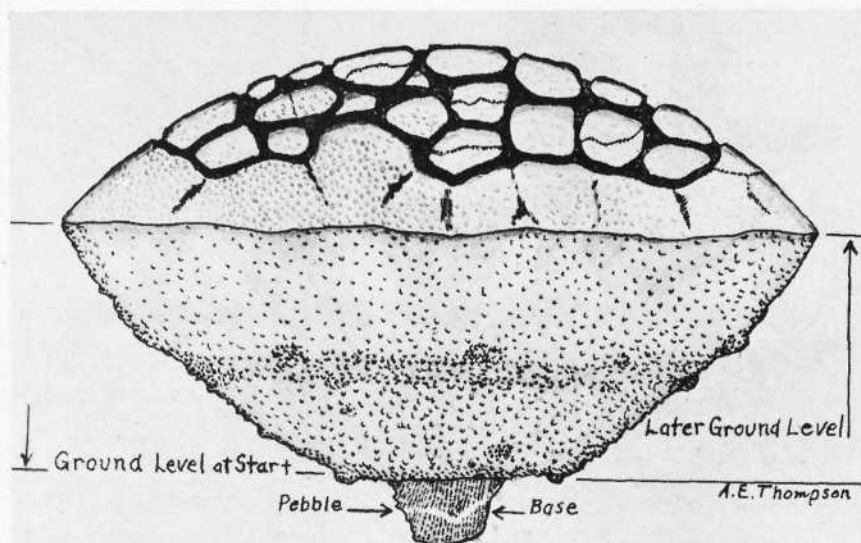
My wife and I were at the moment en route to Pyramid; not to fish, but to share in the charm and mystery of the land. On film we caught the dynamic flash of feathery cirrus clouds, whipped by an updraft bouncing above the Sierra Nevada. Back to earth, near the shore, we saw multidomed mammillary masses of giant tufas and, on higher terraces, ragged reefs of upward-flaring, filigreed, scalloped limestone plates. Encompassing the stone cauliflowers at

our feet, they presented a mental glimpse of a time long before Columbus, even long before ancestors of the Paiutes found this magic shore.

From the days of the mountain men and '49ers, travelers and settlers in the deserts of eastern California and western Nevada have noticed with amazement and wonder vast deposits of porous, intricately textured limestone disposed in heads, hummocks, and pillars, and in great sheets, ledges and multiple masses. Many of the ledges resemble coral reefs, though no actual coral is present, and are disposed horizontally along the contours of mountains between what seems to be sandy beaches and wave-cut terraces and cliffs. Some of the limestone masses actually stand in the water at Pyramid Lake, but others are miles away and hundreds of feet above water or any sign of it, except, perhaps, a distant playa lake or dry salt bed.

In the last century, before 1885, a great geologist of the United States Geological Survey, I. C. Russell, studied these limey deposits, classified their various forms and deduced their origin. His work was so thorough that it has stood unchallenged to the present. He found that a great lake of 8422 square miles, twice or more, had occupied the confluent basins east and north of Reno. The deserted strand marks of the lake called Lahontan extend in tortuous contours from Honey Lake, California, to Hawthorne, Nevada, and northward to the Oregon border.

Russell found that Lake Lahontan had supported vast colonies of simple, primitive water plants called blue-green algae which adhered to every solid support beneath the water and, over many centuries, deposited the algal limestone or calcareous tufa often referred to as travertine. Other scientists later confirmed and added to this study. They found that the chemical-biological cycle that made the algal tufas is still at work in Pyramid and Walker Lake and other lakes and streams around the world. Members of the same group of plants live in the ocean, where they assist in building so-called coral reefs, which



*Diagram of algal water biscuits from Carson Sink, Nevada. The colony began as a green, slimy coating on a small pebble that rested on the silty bottom of ancient Lake Lahontan. The algae deposited a coating of calcium carbonate on the pebble, thus expanding the foundation, making room for more algae. So the algal colony and the limestone support continued to grow toward the light. The additional weight pushed the base of the colony down into the silt and the rim grew upward and outward, creating a bowl shape below and a dome shape above. The dome was not solid but consisted of branching columns with water spaces between, all advancing at an even rate.*



on the average contain about  $\frac{1}{4}$  algal limestone and less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  coralline limestone. This accounts in part for the resemblance of the Lahontan tufas to coral reefs. Geologists have found abundant fossil evidence that similar species of plants have been producing algal limestone since the earliest periods of life on our planet Earth.

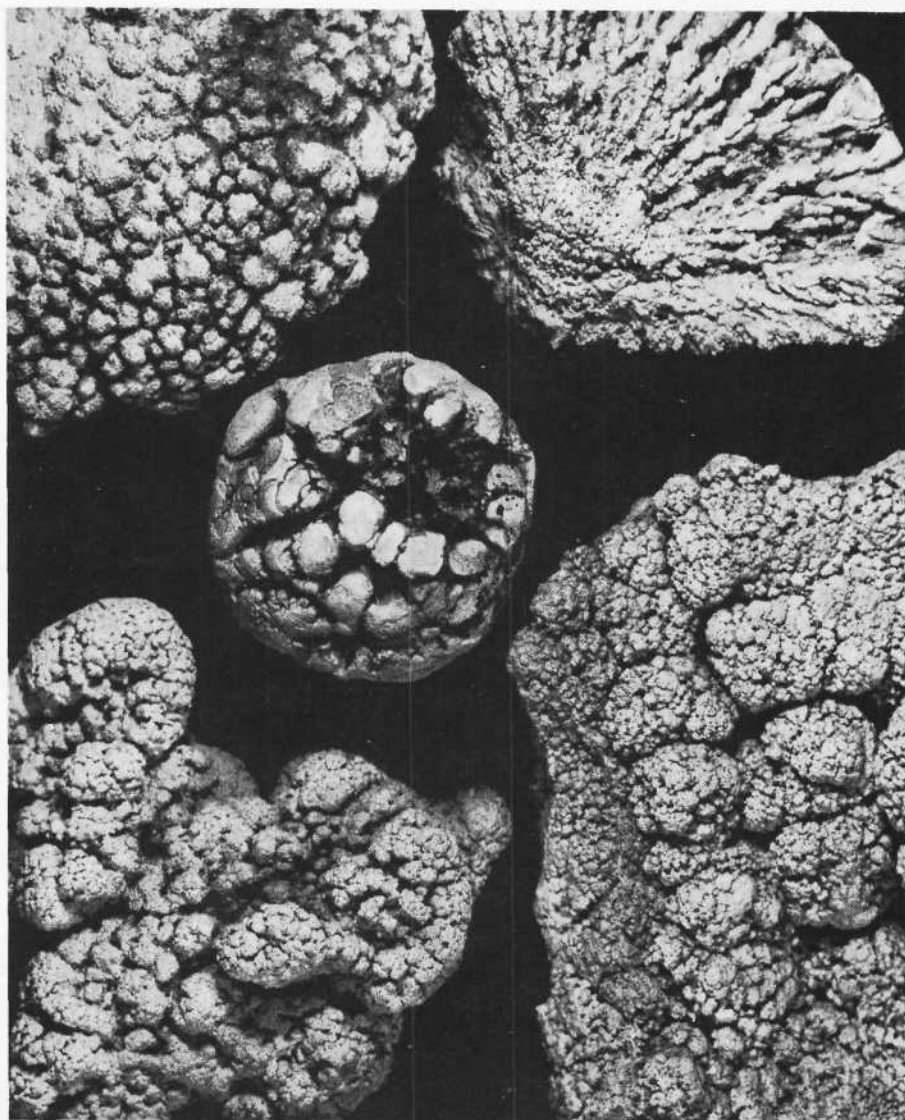
The chemical cycle of reef building may be explained briefly. Water, charged with carbonic acid, dissolves limestone from the surface outcrops of the earth and changes it to calcium bicarbonate which is carried downstream in solution. Blue-green algae in stream, lake or ocean, intercept it, remove the carbon dioxide and leave an insoluble residue of calcium carbonate which, on the spot, becomes limestone once more, in the form of algal tufa.

In the Pyramid and Winnemucca Lake portions of Lake Lahontan there were plentiful submerged rocky points, ledges and cliffs that furnished good solid supports for algal colonies.



*Above: Reef limestone, calcareous algal tufa, above the shore of Pyramid Lake, Nevada.*

*Left: Varied textures of algal tufa deposits, Pyramid Lake and Carson Sink. Upper left: interior of broken biscuit. Upper and lower right: cauliflower type surface. Lower left: pebble and beaded texture. Center: nearly complete small head.*



Some grew to great size in the persistently deep water and now have become distinctive features of the scenery. Out on the underwater flats of shallow bays like Carson Sink in its late stages, shifting sands and settling muds made it difficult for the plants to get and keep a foothold, but some species made a go of it based on individual scattered units with relatively short life. This was the prime home of the small water biscuits and the medium-sized heads or mounds. Fluctuating water level no doubt limited the life span and size of these units. Favorite starting places for the tiny colonies were pebbles projecting above mud or sand. The colonies grew from the size of a thimble to that of a cabbage, a washtub, an executive's desk or a camping trailer, depending upon the continuity of environment. Most of them developed rounded, symmetrical shapes like heads of cauliflower, stemless toadstools, flower bowls or hemispheres, with the original pebble cemented in at the bottom near the middle. As the weight of the "heads" increased, those on soft bottom sank

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into the mud. This changed the direction of their growth to a shallow bowl shape surmounted by a dome. Where the bottom of the lake was flat and hard, providing lasting support, it became coated with irregular flat sheets, or crusts, of rough textured tufa having surface features like teeth, beadwork or grill patterns.

Collectors of loose tufa "heads" have a tendency to display their specimens wrong side up, not knowing which way they grew. When shown in the natural position, the dense smooth side with a pebble in the middle is in the bottom. The cracked or open-textured surface is the top. The broken tops and porous interiors of the heads have been weathered out, leaving an open bowl shape.

At its highest, Lake Lahontan stood nearly 900 feet above the present bottom of Pyramid Lake. In-

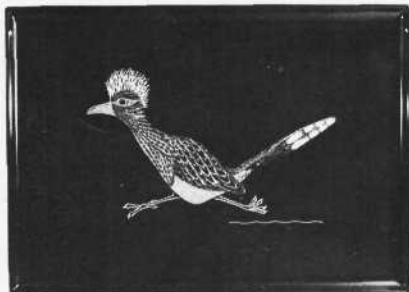
cluding all water and enclosed shore features, it occupied about 1/6 of the Great Basin area which is not just one basin, but about 100 separate undrained depressions with mountains between them.

Eventually, following the final disappearance of the great ice fields and larger glaciers of the Sierra Nevada which had been feeding Lake Lahontan, the main body evaporated below the divides and left smaller lakes in the separate basins. Lately, all of these except Walker and Pyramid have disappeared, leaving wet season playas or dry salt flats where residual minerals were deposited. In the shrinking lakes a goodly share of the calcium carbonate was laid down on the higher shores by algae. The rest of it was carried down with more soluble salts to the lowest parts of the basins. When the saturation point was reached in the solution and evaporation continued, the minerals crystallized out the carbonates first, on the bottom; the gypsum next, in the middle; and the salts last, on the top. Pyramid was saved from this fate. Fed by the Truckee River, it has in recent time overflowed northward over a low divide, unloading its salts into the Smoke Creek Desert. If this does not happen again, Pyramid Lake will become more salty. Walker Lake has been receding quite rapidly in the last few years and seems destined to become a playa.

Many of the basins of former lakes contain tufa deposits. Best known are The Pillars near Trona, Travertine Point, near Coachella, the Lake Russell Reef at Lee Vining, and a deposit near Wingate Pass in the Panamints. The algal tufas of California and Nevada have great scientific and scenic value. It is hoped that outdoorsmen will preserve them from destruction of any sort. ///

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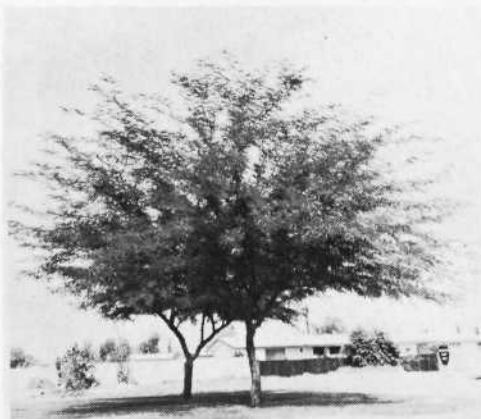
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**G**ROUPED AROUND a sun-baked plaza near the old Vulture Mine in Arizona is a weatherbeaten collection of stone and adobe buildings. These, together with sundry frame shacks, make up what remains of Vulture City, a gold mining camp steeped in a history of violence. The larger stone structures at the left in the photo contain the assay office at the far end, then the bullion storage room and mine offices. Last and nearest is a large general store. At the extreme right is a now decrepit structure that may or may not have been the jail. Better documented is the history of the old ironwood tree which stands in front. No less than 19 men's bodies have dangled from its heavy lower limb during the active period in Vulture City's history. Death by strangulation on the hanging tree was the fate of murderers, horse thieves and one philanderer. The latter was the 19th and last victim, being ushered to the noose at gunpoint by the outraged spouse of one of the fair ladies of the camp.

In the floor of the bullion-holding vault in the central building is a cavernous stone-lined pit covered by a heavy iron door. This was used during periods of heavy gold production to store bullion awaiting shipment. One day in the 1880s a string of three horsemen and two pack-horses drew up in front of the group of buildings. Two of the men were the notorious Valenzuela brothers, Inocente and Francisco, the other was unidentified. When the roughly-dressed men demanded that the vault be opened and the gold handed over, a guard and the superintendent protested. Both were instantly killed by the bandits. Then, under cover of Francisco, Inocente entered the room and lifted the door, which was conveniently unlocked contrary to rules. While the third man waited, the brothers transferred the bars to the ready boxes on the pack horses. About this time a blaze of gunfire broke out on both sides. One bandit was killed; the other two made their getaway while a posse was being organized. By the time they were overtaken, they had buried the gold. One robber was killed, the other purposely permitted to escape. He was shadowed for two months, after which time he felt it safe to return for his hard won gold. He was allowed to uncover the cache, then summarily shot.

Henrich Heintzel had long known of the good vein of coal on his father's land in Austria. He had wanted to mine and sell it to augment family finances, always near the vanishing point, but the father refused.

# VULTURE CITY, ARIZONA

BY LAMBERT FLORIN

A monthly feature by the author of *Ghost Town Album*, *Ghost Town Trails*, *Western Ghost Towns* and *Western Ghost Town Shadows*



After the old man's death, young Heinrich found out why. He dug some and sold it, then found the government would punish him for not turning it over to them. He fled to America, changing his name to Henry Wickenburg. He never stopped until he got to Arizona, where he took up a career of prospecting. Arriving in Yuma in 1862, he made plans to join the party of Major Van Bibber at La Paz, but got there too late. The young man, fresh from Austria, managed to track the Major and his party through 200 miles of Arizona desert to Peeples Valley, where he joined the group.

After all that trouble, the party split up because of poor results in prospecting along the Hassayampa, and Wickenburg headed into the nearby hills alone. There, too, results were meager. The Austrian considered rejoining the Van Bibber party, but camped near a peak to think over his decision. To obtain a broom to clean his tent, he shot a wheeling vulture for its feathered wing. He hit

the bird alright, but it didn't die immediately. When Henry picked it up, the bird's thrashing wings brushed the dirt from a chunk of almost solid gold, uncovering a vein that would yield millions of dollars, though not to him.

After struggling with the Vulture Mine single-handed for several years, he sold out to the giant Phelps Dodge Corporation. Reputedly he received only \$20,000, the down payment. When years of litigation failed to produce more, Henry Wickenburg walked out of his tiny shack on the Hassayampa, sat down on a rock under a nearby tree and shot himself in the head.

In the meantime, a town had grown up along the Hassayampa and because of the Austrian's early attempts to mill his ore there, it acquired his name. Modern Wickenburg has now become the center of a complex of dude ranches, admittedly hot in summer, but with perfect temperature in winter. ///

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## BONES OF BAJA (Continued from Page 25)

one in which Ricardo discovered the bones and artifacts mentioned above. Manuelo had also accompanied that exploration and after our departure last spring, he reported Ricardo's discovery to the fishermen in the area. One of them climbed the mountain to place a picture of The Madonna and a candle in the cave. We have found that natives will not dig where there are signs of former inhabitants. Now the site was adequately marked!

Following a mountain goat trail, I discovered other large caves, but no artifacts. Across the valley another series of large caves tempted me and I was about to take off for them when I noticed a faint trail leading between two fallen rocks. Squeezing between the boulders, I discovered a small cave filled with rocks not indigenous to the area. These, quite obviously, had been deliberately piled in the mouth of the cave. I started to remove them, but it was too great a task for one man.

Returning to the other side of the mountain, I met the rest of the group coming up. They followed me back to the cave.

"There's every indication that this is a burial cave," Dr. Margain said, after examining the rocks. Although by now it was late in the day, Sam Hicks, and Manuelo (who scampers barefoot over the hard, rocky terrain) returned to Manuelo's ranch for shovels while the rest of us removed stones by hand. After encountering two large scorpions, however, we de-

cided to await the shovels. Then, for two hours we dug rocks and dirt from the floor of the cave until we hit hard rock. With the exception of sea shells and a small piece of flint, we found nothing. I was bitterly disappointed. So was everyone else, except Dr. Margain. At least, he didn't show disappointment, but rather, a scientist's reasoning.

"It just isn't logical . . . those stones were put there by man to cover something," he kept repeating.

Reluctantly, we left the diggings and Conception Bay to drive over the dangerous cliff road before dark. That night I dreamed of pre-historic men in a silent empty cave overlooking Conception Bay.

At breakfast the next morning Choral and I expected to find a group of dejected explorers. Instead, Dr. Margain was very enthusiastic.

"All indications point to early man as having lived in this area. It might even be another marginal area where we hope to prove man existed 40,000 years ago," he said. "Baja should certainly be explored and excavated as soon as time and finances permit."

On the way to the airport we stopped to examine and photograph a collection of arrowheads and artifacts owned by two sisters, Senoras Blance Villavicencio and Amelia Villavicencio de Padilla. The collection, which Dr. Margain examined in painstaking detail, was given to them many years ago by their uncle, a Catholic priest.

In the plane flying back to Mexicali, I asked Dr. Margain when and what would be the next step. "First, I will take my findings to the University (of Mexico) and we will tabulate and analyze them from every angle," he explained. "Then I will make my report."

"And when will you start the digging expedition?"

Dr. Margain explained there are 11,000 archeological sites in Mexico alone, all of which in varying degrees contribute to our knowledge of early man.

"Just how important the Baja sites are, must be determined," he said. "But even if they prove very important, it takes time, manpower and money to conduct excavations. For this we need, I am sorry to say, grants and capital from outside sources, other than the Mexican government. We are very thankful to such men as Mr. Gardner for what they have done . . . we need more Mr. Gardners to help in our work."

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and I am certain this trip will lead to important discoveries in the future. Just how soon can only be determined by the economic situation. This, I must say, is the determining factor in all archeological expeditions, but I hope it can come soon. It will not only contribute to our archeological knowledge, but will also help the area economically."

He was interrupted by a shout from Sam Hicks, who had been sitting in a corner making sketches on a notepad.

"I've got it," he yelled. "We weren't digging in the right place. Remember that big rock in front of the cave? That must have originally been part of the overhang . . . the cave was much larger . . . the rock fell down, making us think the cave was smaller than it actually was. The burial place is under the big rock instead of where we were digging!"

"Gentleman, Sam has solved the mystery of the empty cave!" Dr. Margain said. "If we could go back . . ."

But time had caught up with us . . . at least for this trip. We all had appointments which had to be kept, appointments which could not wait, as could our pre-historic men in the caves of Baja.

As we landed at Mexicali, Uncle Erle was busily reviewing his schedule, which included a trip the following week to Japan.

"Now let's see, I get back from Japan in two weeks, finish my book on the Superstition Mountains . . . it would take about two days to get the caravan together . . . we just might be able to head back to Mulege with an excavation party next month . . ." he was mumbling to himself.

And, despite economics, time and appointments, dig we must and dig we will, if I know Erle Stanley Gardner! ///

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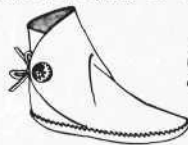
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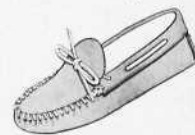
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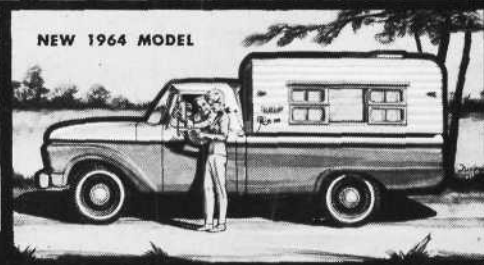
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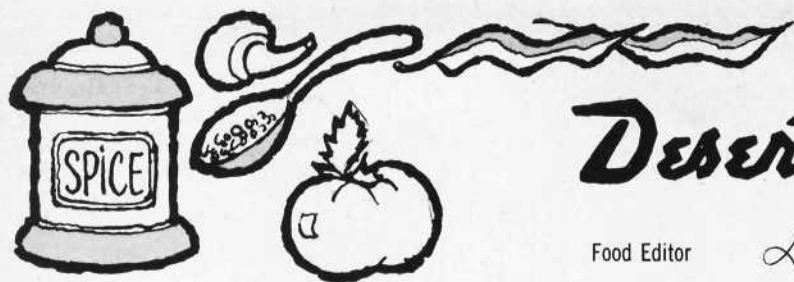
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# Desert COOKERY

Food Editor

*Lucille Iredale Carlson*

## MUSHROOM BEAN CASSEROLE

- 2 cups Navy beans, washed
- ¼ teaspoon soda
- 5 cups water

Soak overnight.

The next day cook the beans in a heavy kettle slowly for 1 to 1½ hours, or until tender but not mushy. When they begin to boil, add 2 teaspoons salt and 2 tablespoons butter. When tender, drain. Cook ¼ cup chopped onion in 2 tablespoons butter until limp. Add ½ lb. sliced mushrooms or 1 to 1½ cups canned drained mushrooms and saute. Now make a white sauce of 6 tablespoons butter, 6 tablespoons flour and 3 cups of milk, salt and pepper to taste. Add ¼ cup cut-up pimento, 2 tablespoons chopped parsley and 2 tablespoons Sherry. Add beans, mushrooms and onions and mix carefully. Turn into buttered casserole and sprinkle with Parmesan cheese. Bake at 325 degrees for about 40 minutes. To make a one dish meal, add chunks of cooked ham.

## POTATO and HAM CASSEROLE

Butter 1½-quart casserole and make a layer of thinly sliced potatoes. Add a layer of cubes or chunks of cooked ham, then another layer of potatoes. Mix ½ can milk with 1 can of mushroom soup, and pour over all. Cook in 350 degree oven for about 45 min. or until potatoes are done.

## RANCH CASSEROLE

Cook 1 lb. ground steak in 1 tablespoon butter, but do not brown. Add

- 1 envelope of onion soup mix
- ½ cup water
- ½ cup chili sauce
- 1 tablespoon vinegar
- 2 cans pork and beans
- 1 can kidney beans

Mix well and add a little water if it seems dry. Cook in covered casserole for 30 minutes at 350 degrees.

## MUSHROOM MEAT LOAF

- 1 cup sliced mushrooms, drained
- ½ cup chopped onion, or 1 teaspoon Instant mixed onion
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 1½ lb. ground beef
- ¾ cup oatmeal
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon salt, pepper
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 2/3 cup milk

Brown mushrooms and onion in butter, slightly. Remove from heat and stir in sour cream. Combine meat, oatmeal, salt, pepper, eggs, Worcestershire sauce and milk. Shape half the meat mixture to form an oval base and place in shallow baking dish. Make well in mound and spoon mushroom filling into this. Shape remaining meat mixture over filling, being sure all filling is covered. Seal bottom and top mixtures by pressing together. Bake at 350 degrees about 1 hour. Let stand for a few minutes before slicing. Pass a bowl of mushroom sauce to pour over loaf. This may be made by heating a can of mushroom soup with ½ can of milk. This is very good and not highly seasoned, as most meat loaves are.

## DINNER MEDLEY

- 1 lb. beef stew meat, cubed
- 1 tablespoon oil or shortening
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 7 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt, pepper
- 1 package dry vegetable soup mix
- 1 1 lb. can stewed tomatoes
- 1 1 lb. can whole kernel corn, drained
- 8 oz. macaroni (I like the shell type)

Brown meat in shortening. Add onion and brown slightly. Add water, salt, pepper and soup mix. Simmer gently, uncovered for 2 hours. Add tomatoes and corn and bring to boil. Add macaroni. Cover and cook for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally until macaroni is tender. 4 to 6 servings.

## SWISS STEAK SUPREME

- 1½ lbs. thin round steak
- Salt and pepper
- Flour
- 2 tablespoons shortening
- ½ cup bouillon or 2 bouillon cubes in ½ cup water
- 1 can Blue Lake vertical beans
- ½ teaspoon Lawry's seasoning salt
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ¼ cup shredded Parmesan cheese
- Tomato wedges

Trim and discard excess fat from steak and cut into serving pieces. Pound flour in with back of knife. Season with salt and pepper. Brown meat in shortening. Add bouillon, cover and cook over low heat until meat is tender, about 1½ to 2 hours. Turn undrained beans into saucepan with Lawry's seasoning and heat gently. Drain beans and arrange on top of meat. Combine mayonnaise and cheese and spoon over beans. Run under broiler until lightly browned. Garnish with tomato wedges.

## DINNER IN FOIL

Place a thick round steak on large enough piece of foil to cover well. Over this spread a package of onion soup mix. Over this slice potatoes or halve small new potatoes. Then put a layer of sliced carrots on top of potatoes and if you wish a few sliced onions. Fold foil over all securely, place in baking pan and bake at 350 degrees for 2 hours.

## CAMP SPAGHETTI

Cook 1 8 oz. package of spaghetti and drain. Cook 1 lb. ground beef until it loses red color, but is not brown in 1½ tablespoons oil or butter. Add salt and pepper to taste. Combine spaghetti, meat, 1 finely cut onion, 1 can tomatoes and cook for about 20 minutes. Add 1 large can sliced mushrooms and cook 5 minutes longer.



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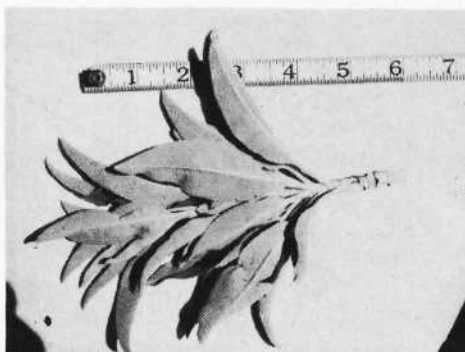
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by Sam Hicks



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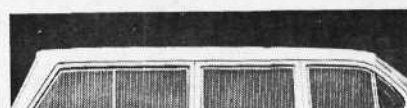
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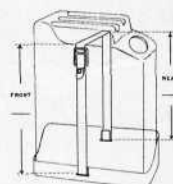
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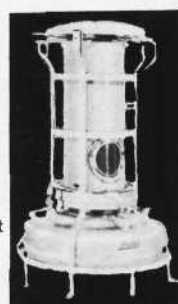
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## ● PLANTS, SEEDS

1965 WILDFLOWER AND Wild Tree Seed Catalog, lists over 700 choice varieties including many bonsai. Scientific name, common name. Informative; artistic; trade secrets revealed. 50c Clyde Robin, Collector of Wildflower and Wild Tree Seeds, P.O. Box 2091, Castro Valley, Calif. For early spring blooms plant wildflower seeds before December.

SMOKETREES, OTHER Hi-Desert natives from \$1. Send a friend. Rancho Environmental Nursery, 71554 Samarkand Drive, Twentynine Palms, California, 92277. Demonstration Garden and Phone 367-6124.

## ● REAL ESTATE

FOR INFORMATION on desert acreage and parcels for sale in or near Twentynine Palms, please write to or visit: Silas S. Stanley, Realtor, 73644 Twentynine Palms Highway, Twentynine Palms, California.

400,000,000 ACRES government land available in 25 states, some low as \$1 acre, 1964 report. Send \$1 to National Land, 422T2 Washington Building, Washington, D.C.

## ● TREASURE FINDERS

FIND LOST or hidden treasures with new transistor metal detector, underwater metal detectors, scintillation counters, etc. Free literature. Gardiner Electronics, Dept. 51, 4729 North 7th Ave., Phoenix, Arizona.

FINEST TRANSISTOR metal locators, \$34.95 to \$275. Find coins, souvenirs, treasure. Informative folder, "Metal Locating Kinks," 25c. IGWTD, Williamsburg, New Mexico.

POWERFUL METROTECH locators detect gold, silver, coins, relics. Moneyback guarantee. Terms, free information. Underground Explorations, Dept. 3A, Box 793, Menlo Park, California.

NEW SUPERSENSITIVE transistor locators detect buried gold, silver, coins. Kits, assembled models. \$19.95 up. Underwater models available. Free catalog. Relco-A18, Box 10563 Houston, 18, Texas.

DISCOVER BURIED loot, gold, silver, coins, battlefield and ghost town relics, with most powerful, sensitive transistorized metal detectors available. Two Year Warranty. Free literature. Goldak, Dept. DM, 1544 W. Glenoaks, Glendale, California 91201.

## ● TREASURE FINDERS

FUN & PROFIT finding buried treasure, relics with transistor M-Scope. Known worldwide for supersensitivity, dependability. Guaranteed. Very easy terms. Send for free literature, fascinating user experiences. Fisher Research, Dept. JZ, Palo Alto, California.

## ● WESTERN MERCHANDISE

GHOST TOWN items: Sun-colored glass, amethyst to royal purple; ghost railroads materials, tickets; limited odd items from camps of the '60s. Write your interest—Box 64-D, Smith, Nevada.

RANCH TRADING Post. Antiques, relics, bottles. Saturday and Sunday treasure-table specials. Stop on your way through scenic Coachella Valley. Weekends only or phone EXpress 9-5526. Avenue 62 and Monroe; 8 miles south of Indio, signs to ranch.

FOR SALE: Private collection purple desert glass, 50 pieces \$100. Plus postage, 25403 Bejoal Street, Barstow, California.

COLLECTION OF 10 unusual desert rocks and crystals, \$3 postpaid. Cholla cactus jewelry. Beautiful wood and rock for indoor or patio arrangements. Desert Comber, Box 5066, Phoenix, Arizona.

WANTED! COLLECTOR buys defunct railroad stock and bond certificates, especially Western. Have you any? Robert Greenawalt, 3643 North Rosemead, Rosemead, California.

## ● MISCELLANEOUS

HAVE A sweet tooth? Try Sally's Vitality Bar with Chia, new space age concentrated confection, delicious, nutritious. Box 24 bars (each 1 1/2 oz.) \$5.95; six bars \$2 postpaid. California buyers add 4% tax. Sally's Food Co. Box 780, Newhall, Calif.

FISHERMEN, TRANSISTORIZED fish call, patented and tested. Creates sonic oscillations and light waves, brings fish from 300 yards. Send for complete details. Rama Sales, Dept. D., 4700 Crenshaw, Los Angeles, Calif. 90043.

*Let DESERT say, "Thank you."*





### No Arch Criminals . . .

*To the Editor:* When Mrs. Rollins reported that neither she nor Capt. Bill Wessel could locate Calico's famous Kramer Arch, I dropped the Nov. DESERT and jumped into my car.

There have been cases of devastating vandalism in this region during recent years. That someone had dynamited Kramer Arch was my immediate fear. This arch is not very large, compared to other scenic arches in the West, but it's distinctive. When I came to the Mule Canyon-Phillips Drive junction where the road to Kramer's Arch forks to the left, and ascended the serpentine grade of the hill to park beside the footpath to Kramer's Arch, I dreaded the sight that might await me at its end.

Fortunately, all was well. Like a fat doughnut, Kramer arched across the pink terrain. Sunlight flooded through its opening and a glorious sky hung above. Everythink at Kramer's Arch was like it always had been during my lifetime, and like it will be, I hope, for many years to come. There aren't any signs to direct tourists to it, but I'm grateful to be able to report to DESERT readers that it's still right where it belongs and it's not too hard to find if you look for the footpath.

MARIE HUBBELL,  
Yermo, California

### Preserve Piute Beaut . . .

*To the Editor:* Your May, 1964 issue carried an article about California's vanishing Piute Cypress that interested us. Mr. Arthur Ogilvie of Palo Alto, advisor for our Explorer Post 205 of the San Mateo County Council of Boy Scouts, read it and suggested we add the preservation of this species to a project already underway for the preservation of the Santa Lucia Fir. The Post has made trips to the Piute Cypress area on Sequoia National Forest land to do what physical services could be done, such as cutting down weeds to open seedlings to the light. Mr. Ogilvie has written to the Forest Service to see if the Post can fence around the seedlings and the tree of the lone tree grove to keep cattle from damaging seedlings and to prevent further compaction of the soil around the lone tree by the cattle. The groves that exist on private property are on land now leased for mining exploration and a number of trees are being destroyed. We have contacted various conservation organizations and hope it will be possible to purchase the 150-acre parcel of the Bodfish Grove and the entire 500-600 acres of the Back Canyon Grove so as to establish a Piute Cypress Preserve under the Bureau of Land Management and the Forest and Park Services. By writing to Explorer Post 205, Bsa., East Palo Alto, Calif., interested citizens who would like to help may inquire about the Piute Cypress Preserve Fund.

PETER LARNED,  
East Palo Alto, California

## LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelopes

### Admirer of Borax Smith . . .

*To the Editor:* I was interested in the article about Borax Smith in the Nov. '64 issue. I knew him personally. The story of his life is a tragedy—particularly his decline—and one that should be better understood. His first wife, Mary R. Smith, and my mother were founders of the YWCA in Oakland and with his financial help did a great deal for young women who needed help. He formed the Mary R. Smith Trust with an endowment of \$240,000 to build six homes in East Oakland and a club house known as the Home Club for needy young women. He became interested in public utilities and the development of the barren hillsides back of Berkeley and Piedmont through the salesmanship of Frank Havens, a great dreamer. They formed the Realty Syndicate with Smith's money and put East Bay on the map. The fall of Smith was due to the questionable transactions of a group of bankers who, when the time was right, foreclosed on him and stripped him of his last dollar, even the endowment of the Mary Smith Trust.

PERCY D. GASKILL,  
Santa Ana, California

### Death Valley . . .

*To the Editor:* We in Death Valley thoroughly appreciated the November issue of DESERT and think that you and the feature writers did a very fine job. We know the stories in this special issue about the Valley cloaked in mystery and legend will conjure enthusiasm and bring many new visitors to the area.

JOHN A. AUBUCHON,  
Superintendent,  
Death Valley National Monument

### Chalking of Petroglyphs . . .

*To the Editor:* Your readers will be interested in an opinion on the chalking of petroglyphs for photography that appeared in the Newsletter of the Archeological Survey Assoc. of Southern California last summer. First, chalk, being a precipitate of limestone nearly insoluble in water, is almost impossible to wash off the typically porous rocks into which the petroglyphs are usually incised. The chalk will wash into the pores of rock and remain there for a long time. Second, in chalking a petroglyph one is often required to make subjective judgments as to whether certain lines are part of the original carving. Consequently, a chalked petroglyph may be misrepresented. Third, modern cameras, films, and techniques permit photographing of unchalked petroglyphs with a high degree of clarity and definition. This is especially true if the photo is taken about 15 feet from the rock with the light hitting at right angles to its surface.

ALBERT MOGG,  
Woodland Hills, California

### Found Lost Mine? . . .

*To the Editor:* I read with interest the article in the October issue about Hank Brandt's lost mine. In 1946, while I was working for an Eastern engineering company in the Fish Creek Mountains, I was searching for the section corner of some company property. On the top of a hill I was scanning the terrain through binoculars and noticed a well-defined trail around the side of a hill below. I worked my way down the hill and walked about 500 feet when I came upon a mine shaft. Some prospector had made a lot of trips around the side of that hill and had done a lot of digging. That night, back in Brawley, I told some people about it who believed I had rediscovered the Hank Brandt mine. This particular digging was under a 30-inch-wide vein of ore. There were other diggings nearby, which I did not have time to investigate. As I recall, this was about an hour's walk from Carrizo.

HAROLD HAWKINS,  
San Diego, California

### Desert Oyster Beds . . .

*To the Editor:* Please renew my subscription. I wouldn't want to miss a single issue of DESERT. We were interested in an article in October about a trip to the ancient oyster beds located in Imperial County. We wonder if you know about the oyster beds which are within sight of your office in Palm Desert? In the spring of '24 my husband and I lived at Thousand Palms, which was then called Edom. The grapefruit ranch directly across the tracks from the Southern Pacific RR depot was owned by a Mr. McKesson and his son Ed, who was quite a naturalist, pointed out some yellow clay spots atop the low hills to the north and told us they were oyster beds. We made several trips to them and found the yellow clay contained shells of all sizes—some up to six inches across. We thought this might interest readers traveling in that area.

ETHEL LUTTRELL,  
Norco, California

### PHOTO CONTEST RULES

1—Prints for monthly contests must be black and white, 5x7 or larger, printed on glossy paper.

2—Each photograph submitted should be fully labeled as to subject, time and place. Also technical data: camera, shutter speed, hour of day, etc.

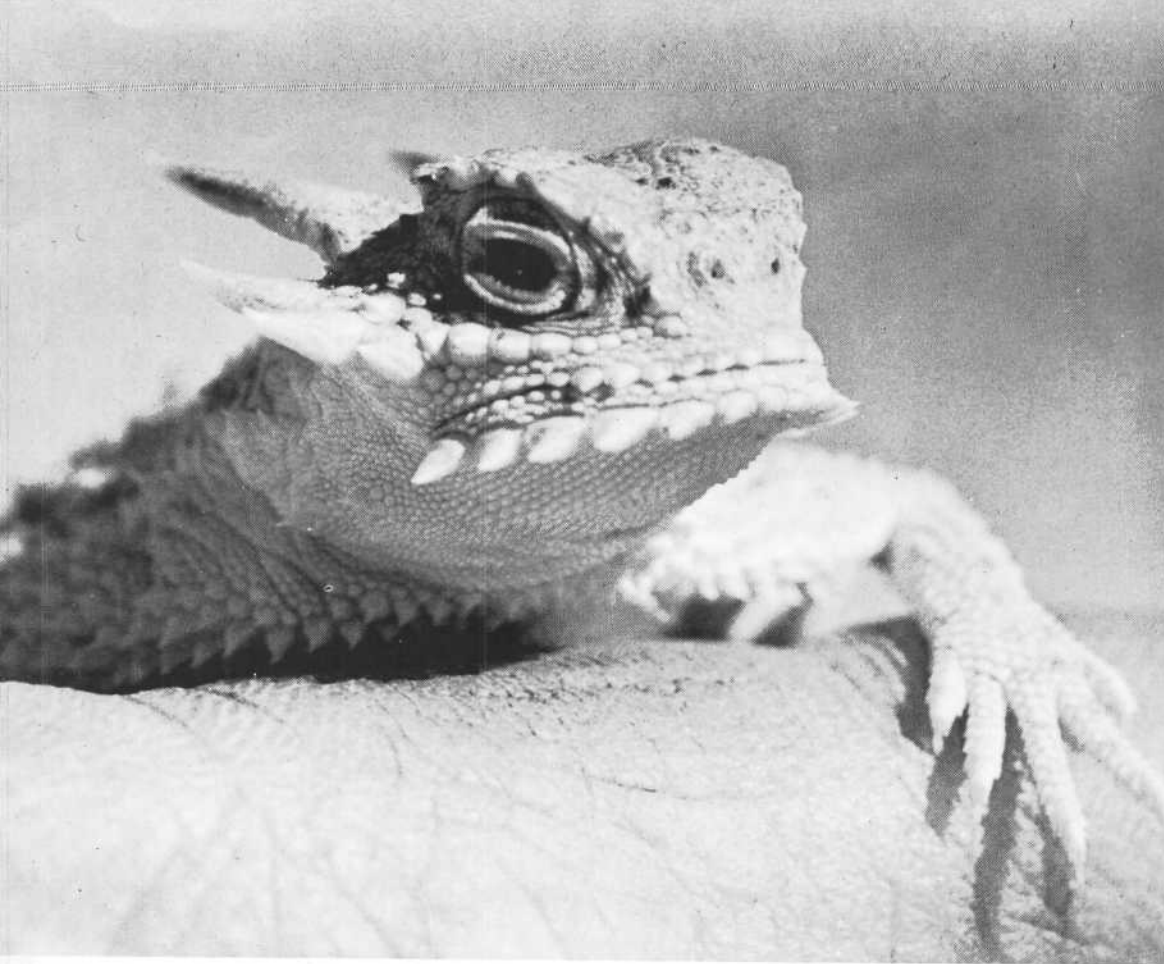
3—PRINTS WILL BE RETURNED ONLY WHEN RETURN POSTAGE IS ENCLOSED.

4—All entries must be in the Desert Magazine office by the 20th of the contest month.

5—Contests are open to both amateur and professional photographers.

6—FIRST PRIZE will be \$15; SECOND PRIZE, 8. For non-winning pictures accepted for publication \$3 each will be paid. Although not part of the contest, Desert is also interest in viewing 4x5 color transparencies for possible front cover use. We pay \$25 per transparency.





**JANUARY**

**PHOTO**

**CONTEST**

**WINNERS**

## First Prize

### **"I VOTED REPUBLICAN"**

**Ruth A. Brown**

SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

By handling this 4-inch horned toad or lizard (*Phrynosoma*, a branch of the iguana family) gently, he posed on her father's hand as Miss Brown shot him with a double extended bellows on a 4x5 Crown Graphic, using ground glass focusing, with a subject to lens distance of about 5 inches. DATA: Royal Pan, 200 at f22.

## Second Prize

### **FOSSIL BEDS**

**James E. Price**

BARSTOW, CALIFORNIA

A wierdly shaped Joshua Tree is the foreground for the fossil beds near Barstow, California. DATA: Rollicflex, 2.8 lens, Pantatomic X, 125 at f16.



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